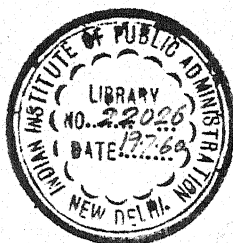


# MORE CHANGES MORE CHANCES

BY  
HENRY W. NEVINSON



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DEDICATED TO  
MY GREAT EDITOR  
HENRY W. MASSINGHAM  
WHO DIED AUGUST 27, 1924.

*Verlorner Posten in dem Freiheitskriege  
Hielt ich seit dreissig Jahren treulich aus.  
Ich kämpfte ohne Hoffnung dass ich siege,  
Ich wusste, nie komm' ich gesund nach Haus.*

*Ein Posten ist vakant!—Die Wunden klaffen—  
Der Eine fällt, die Andern rücken nach—  
Doch fall' ich unbesiegt, und meine Waffen  
Sind nicht gebrochen—Nur mein Herze brach.*

HEINE.



## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is simply a continuation of the volume called "Changes and Chances," issued by the same publishers in the autumn of 1923. It begins soon after the conclusion of the South African War, which I called the end of an epoch, and it ends at the beginning of the Great War, which certainly marked an epoch too. The years covered count little more than ten, but for me they were years of considerable activity, and of permanent interest for the whole world.

Perhaps I may be allowed here to add a personal note, for I suppose an autobiography cannot help being personal. For many years past I have heard that an entirely fictitious myth has gathered round my name. For instance, towards the end of the period here represented, my friend and sometime editor, Mr. A. G. Gardiner, usually so keen and discerning an interpreter of character and mind, writing in his own paper, the *Daily News*, actually described me as a champion of all lost causes, the invariable supporter of the under-dog, and always charged with a fury of indignation. Thinking of an imaginary Knight Errant, he wrote :

"He boils with indignation or scorn, and throws discretion to the winds. He has a noble thirst for fighting forlorn battles. He does not care so much about the merits of a cause so long as it is the cause of the under-dog. The under-dog is always right because he is the under-dog. Let him become the top-dog and the Knight Errant's passion for him is chilled. . . . This instinct is very apparent in such conspicuous crusaders as Mr. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. Nevinson. They bring into life a fine, uncalculating spirit of chivalry, the one touched with ironic scorn, the other charged with a fury of indignation ; but both entirely

unselfish and elevating, and both a little inclined to regard the question of odds as more important than that of merits. They love to be on the side of the failures, and distrust all success as, *ipso facto*, a little squalid."

That is really a very fine panegyric, and it must always be a delight to find oneself coupled with a man like Cunningham Graham. Anyone might well wish such a panegyric and such an association to be deserved. But, unfortunately, the whole conception was mistaken. It was in contrast to Mr. Noel Buxton's reasonableness and steady persistence (and well he deserves the praise) that Mr. Gardiner dragged me in as an example of blind and unreasonable indignation and impulsiveness. I should have thought he knew me better, for my weakness is quite the other way. No judge or philosopher makes up his mind with more painful deliberation, and nothing but the calmest exercise of reason would ever induce me to take one side rather than another, though the first impulse of every decent Englishman is, of course, to favour the under-dog.

Far from being charged with a fury of indignation, I am much too easily appeased, much too placable, much too considerate not only of my enemy's feelings, but even of his arguments. Until the moment comes when the coldest of reasonable beings could no longer avoid indignation, I avoid it only too carefully. I feel a shrinking horror at its approach. Short of actually running away, there is hardly anything I would not do to elude it. As the Prayer Book bids me, I seek peace and ensue it, and the sweet reasonableness that Swift and Matthew Arnold commended is in me carried to an excess that falls into hesitation.

Guided only too cautiously in my endeavours to discover where reason and justice lie, I have never wasted time upon any lost cause, and indeed almost every cause for which I have contended has already been won. Take the examples obvious in "Changes and Chances" and in the present volume. Greece has been almost entirely released from Turkish misgovernment, and so has Macedonia. The Boers,

united with Britons, compose an almost independent South African State. Thousands of slaves have been repatriated from San Thomé and Príncipe, the whole system of Portuguese slavery has been mitigated, and but for the war would probably have ceased. The Russian Tsardom has been overthrown, and the Revolution has triumphed: whether for good or ill is not the question. Caucasian Georgia did for a time regain its freedom from the Russian oppressor. Self-government in India has been greatly advanced. Woman Suffrage is established, and women sit in Parliament. Albania is recognised by the League of Nations as an independent country. And Ireland has obtained a measure of self-government that would have seemed incredible to the Home Rulers of twenty or even ten years ago. For all those "lost causes" and "under-dogs" I have done what little a mere journalist in my position could do, and now all those causes are won, all those under-dogs stand on top.

I ask readers to excuse this spirit of exultation in one who is compelled, with extreme regret, to recognise that the years of life remaining to him must now be few, and the activities of life will gradually decline. But I am unwilling to remain the subject of a myth, however enviable. I believe that Seneca was not quite the rigid philosopher he imagined himself to be, but I like his verses:

*Sic cum transierint mei  
Nullo cum strepitu dies,  
Plebeius moriar senex.  
Illi mors gravis incubat  
Qui notus nimis omnibus  
Ignotus moritur sibi.*

In our times nobody's days are likely to pass without noise and turbulence, but at all events let me die *plebeius senex*—old and a member of the Labour Party! Certainly I shall not be too much known to the world, but at all events I shall die not so unknown to myself as to take pride in an estimate flatteringly false.

H. W. N.



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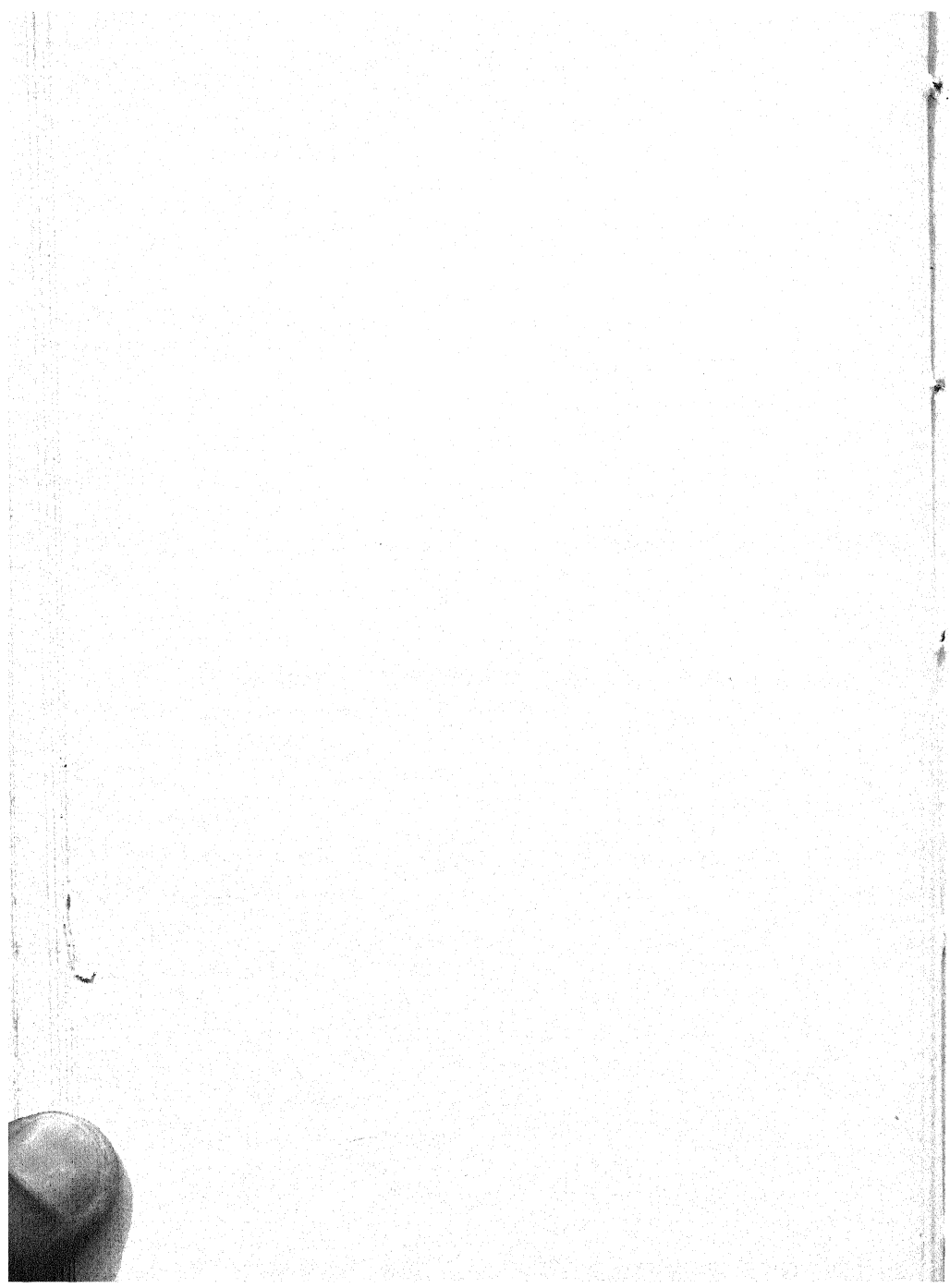
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# MORE CHANGES MORE CHANCES

## CHAPTER I

### A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

"O free indeed! O gloriously free  
Am I in freedom from three crooked things:—  
From quern, from mortar, from my crookback'd lord!"

*Hymn of a Buddhist Nun, after leaving her Husband.*  
(*"Psalms of the Sisters,"* by Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 15.)

N EAR the end of a previous volume, called "Changes and Chances," I described the exhilaration with which I set out for Macedonia in October, 1903, and I quoted one of my favourite sayings from Samuel Butler: "Behold and see if there be any happiness like unto the happiness of the devils when they found themselves cast out of Mary Magdalene." Of course, I could not say for certain, but I thought my happiness was of much the same quality. At all events, I had escaped from an irksome captivity. For three years I had been enslaved to a newspaper under an editor with whose main principles, however estimable and popular, I could not agree for a single working night. It would be unjust to compare the *Daily Chronicle* at any time with the body of poor Mary Magdalene in the days of her sin, but then I suppose it was not on account of her sin that the devils rejoiced at their escape. They rejoiced in emerging from so narrow and limited a sphere, and with glee they winged their way into the open spaces of this wide world, gladly embracing the opportunity for

unknown adventures, and gloriously uncertain of their future service. Such glee was mine, such glorious uncertainty, and when the year ended, I could write of it : "A full year, and a successful, except that I am ruined."

It was through Noel Buxton's beneficent suggestion that I escaped. With James Bryce as President, he was Chairman of the Balkan Committee (as he remained in 1924 when he became President) and at his own personal expense he desired to send me out to investigate and report on behalf of that Committee, while Henry Brailsford and Jane Malloch Brailsford went as agents of the Macedonian Relief Fund, of which Bertram Christian was Chairman. The suggestion was made on October 15th ; on the 18th I had left lucrative Fleet Street behind me, and all the world lay open in front. On the chance of escape, I would have gone to either pole, or have followed the equator round and round, but I especially welcomed the call to Macedonia because I had already some acquaintance with the Balkans owing to my visits to Greece, in 1895 and during the war with Turkey in 1897, and because Macedonia was then the chief point of interest in European affairs.

That part of the Turkish Empire which foreigners vaguely called Macedonia had been more than usually disturbed throughout the year 1903. The great majority of its Christian inhabitants were Bulgarian by race, and under Abdul Hamid's rule had long been exposed to the insolence, persecution, and slaughter which, together with the art of setting race against race—a facile business—were that Sultan's methods of securing tranquillity among his Christian subjects. I think difference of race prompted his action rather than difference of religion, though it is hard to draw a distinction ; for religion in the Balkans is rather a matter of race than of spiritual faith. The Servians and the Greeks, for instance, while holding the same doctrines as the Bulgars in regard to the Christian verities, detested the Bulgars more than they detested each other, and as much as they detested the Turks ; not because the Bulgars were Ex-



archists (a question of no doctrinal significance) but because they were Bulgars. Accordingly, when Russia and Austria concocted a scheme of reforms for Macedonia early in that year, the Servians, whose officers had in June massacred their King and Queen together with their Prime Minister and the Queen's brother, declared that Macedonia needed no reforms, and that they strongly disapproved of any such proposal. Later on in the year also, M. Ralli, the Greek Premier, announced that Greeks and Turks had one common enemy, namely the Bulgars. Thus encompassed by Christian and Moslem foes, the Bulgars appealed to the public opinion of Europe in Balkan fashion. Crying: "Better an end with horror than horrors without end," bands, known as Comitadjís, poured across the Bulgarian frontier into Macedonia under the chief command of General Zontcheff and Boris Saráffoff, harassing Turkish outposts, rousing their compatriots to revolt, raiding or burning Turkish villages, and blowing up the Ottoman Bank in Salonika.

In support of law and order, the Turks retaliated with similar actions, exaggerated in proportion to their power and savagery. All through that summer we heard of abominations that recalled the "Bulgarian atrocities" which had roused the leonine rage of Mr. Gladstone more than a quarter of a century before—wholesale massacres of Bulgar populations, tortures of men, ravishing of women, and the utter destruction of villages. The appeal to the heart of Europe was more violent than successful. France sat upon her franks unmoved. Germany kept a prudent eye fixed upon the Sultan's friendship and the future chance. But Russia and Austria had interests—similar interests, though in sharp opposition. Macedonia was like a girl left with a small fortune in the power of a cruel stepfather; Russia and Austria were her benevolent uncles, each claiming the right of guardianship, and each conscious of that small fortune. Accordingly, when the insurrection began to die down, late in September, and the process of restoring peace by annihilation seemed fairly satisfactory, the Tsar Nicholas met the

old Emperor of Austria at Mürzsteg, and excogitated another scheme of reforms, which the Sultan agreed to accept "in principle." Under these reforms, Russia and Austria were to appoint two Agents to work side by side with the Turkish Inspector-General appointed by an earlier scheme ; mixed Commissions of Moslems and Christians were to examine the political and other crimes reported during the recent slaughters ; and the Sultan was to set aside special sums for the rebuilding of houses, schools, and churches in the devastated villages. A gendarmerie under foreign officers was also to be established in various provinces, and it actually was established in the following year. But otherwise the reforms became ridiculous rather than remedial, and no breach was made in the established traditions of Turkish administration.

The situation did not appear exhilarating, and yet I doubt whether a happier party ever gathered in a foreign and perilous land than was ours when the Brailsfords overtook me at Salonika. Every day that we spent together was filled with jest and laughter ; though certainly our joy was not due to want of sympathy with the ghastly suffering around us. My happiness might be accounted for by freedom from an unendurable bondage, and by associating once more with people akin to my spirit. Theirs—well, they were delightfully young, both well under thirty. Henry Brailsford was conscious already of that extraordinary mental energy which has since served him and others so well in many a noble conflict ; he was endowed with the accurate mind and unfailing memory that suited him for the work before us ; and he was inspired by a sensitive and sympathetic temperament, singularly susceptible to every fine impression whether of beauty, happiness, or pity. He also possessed unflagging industry and a power of organisation due perhaps rather to his Scottish upbringing than to his English birth. And Jane Brailsford was endowed with much the same qualities, beautified by the further touch of feminine delicacy and imagination ; beautified also by

Celtic blue-grey eyes, dark hair, and a smile to soften the heart of any Turk or even of any infidel. To both was further given that peculiar form of courage which sensitive people sometimes display, as it were in contradiction to themselves—a courage which both had proved already and were to prove often again. Yet all this would hardly account for our paradoxical merriment in the midst of such a scene. It was a merriment that I have sometimes noticed since then among friends who stand in considerable danger, but are united for a common and difficult object from which none of them even thinks of turning aside.

So there we were together in Salonika, looking over the deep blue bay to the snowy curves and peaks of Mount Olympus, which I had gazed upon from Thessaly six years before, and was for many weeks to gaze upon again from Salonika during the Great War twelve years later. On that first visit Salonika stood in all its Oriental beauty, with its walls, its Roman buildings, and its three superb Byzantine churches (then mosques) still untouched by fire or the presence of European troops. There we found our Consul-General, Robert Windham Graves, lately arrived from Crete, and already having behind him a prolonged service in the Near and Middle East. He was a brother of my Christ Church friend, Charles L. Graves, humorist, writer, and musician, and, certainly not for that reason only, he gave us all the advantage of his knowledge and influence. He took me to visit the Vali, an oldish, grey-bearded man, talking French with success, and protesting that no doubt we had been filled up with lies, but the Turks had nothing to answer for—nothing more than the English, who had fired men from guns in India and burnt the villages in the Transvaal. It was difficult for an Englishman to reply, especially as the last café on the harbour front was then called the “Café au Transvaal,” as though in defiance of our hypocrisy. In Salonika I also found H. A. Gwynne (now, in 1925, editor of the *Morning Post*) whose judgment and tolerance I had learnt to respect in South Africa, and who had lately been

up in Monastir and Krushivo for the *Times*. Turks had shown him round, and his sympathy was mainly for the Turks; for how could his temperament resist that well-worn phrase describing the Turk as "The Gentleman of the Near East?" It was true that the gentleman had acquired queer attributes and habits, but it was not hard to justify the title in one who for five centuries had possessed the sole right to bear arms, and many less reputable rights as well.

On October 25th, we merrily crept for ten hours up the tortuous route to Monastir—a tortuous route because the railway was made under contract by the kilometre, multiplied as much as possible, and serpentining over any bit of plain with no ungentlemanly haste. Next day we made our formal call upon the Inspector-General in his *konak* beside the rushing stream that divides that beautiful town standing upon its high mountain plateau. Hussein Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General, always known as Hilmi, was supposed to be omnipotent in Macedonia, and he fondly believed the supposition. There was something attractive and even superb about the man. After various interviews with him, I wrote at the time:

"Hilmi Pasha sat in Monastir, pacifying the Sultan's misguided subjects. His room was heated to a genial warmth, his dark blue uniform was drawn tightly round his tall and graceful figure, his fez thrown rather back from his pale and weary face, relieved so effectively against the carpet of deep purples and crimsons that further darkened the wall behind. It is the face of a tired but unflinching eagle, thin and worn with toil. On each side of the delicate eagle nose, the deep brown eyes looked into yours with a mournful but steady sincerity that would carry conviction of truth into the wildest tale of 'Arabian Nights.' A grave charm hangs over the face, sometimes broken by a shadowy smile, as when he said: 'I see by the *Times* that, on reaching Castoria, you will find that beautiful town in ruins.' Often, while going down the stairs, still hearing in my ears the attractive voice that had just said: 'My only desire is that the truth should be known; my only object is to

restore tranquillity and happiness among the people whose treatment at the hands of the Government has been so generous, I might even say, so magnanimous,'—often I have thought that here at last was a Turkish official capable, just, and inspired with a benevolent zeal for reform. That is 'the Hilmi charm.' ”<sup>1</sup>

I was deceived, as most people are deceived by every typical bureaucrat till long experience has taught them what bureaucracy really means, and what an infinite gulf may lie between the official command and its execution. All day long Hilmi sat in that official residence, pacifying the Sultan's troublesome subjects, but he never saw a single ruined village or spoke to a single villager, whether Moslem or Christian, Bulgar or Turk. No Turk ever worked so hard. From dawn till far into the night his door stood open to everyone who came. There was no waiting, no affectation or mysterious grandeur such as sickens the heart in the ante-chambers of ordinary rulers and bureaucrats. One after another his visitors came and went—soldiers, officials, consuls, and correspondents. They took their seats, dispersed around the divan, and Hilmi dealt with them in turn or together, with equal ease. In that complexity of tongues and cases, he never lost hold of the threads, or betrayed one particle of truth to all those listening ears. From time to time he would scribble a note upon a scrap of paper, held in the palm of the left hand, as is the Turkish manner, would hand it to an orderly, and the applicant's heart would rise. On the first occasion it would rise. If in a month's time he came to complain that no redress had yet been given, Hilmi would answer with an astonished smile: "But all must be well; I gave the order!" Of all the incarnations of State that I have known in any land perhaps he was the most complete.

<sup>1</sup> In support of this impression I may refer to a passage in Henry Brailsford's "Macedonia," pp. 300, 301, which is a work of permanent historic value, though the conditions of that country have changed under the present Servian rule, whether for the better or not I am not sure.

While Hilmi was consulting by telegraph with the master who brooded at the centre of his web in Yildiz Kiosk, we waited for a few days, conversing with the refugees who had fled into the town from neighbouring ruined villages, and hearing the invariable tale of all alien races subject to Turkish rule. Here, for the first time, I heard from the villagers themselves of the tax levied upon the marriage of Christian girls, and the *jus primæ noctis* exacted if the tax were not paid. And here, for the first time, I heard that ominous expression, so common throughout Macedonia, that rather than continue as before, the villagers would walk down to the sea and drown themselves. Except for little troubles with patrols after dark, we had no open conflict with authority, though once a typical Englishman who was with us was mobbed and robbed for ignorantly approaching a powder-magazine. The Turkish officer in command complained that our friend spoke "no human tongue," which was hardly fair, seeing that he spoke our public-school French, a language quite comprehensible to any Englishman. But on my representations to a German-speaking Commander-in-Chief, the property was honourably restored, and we were even thanked for not raising an international question on the event.

At last, with unusual speed for Turkey, all delays were surmounted, and one fine morning I went clattering down the road towards Flórina with a cavalry escort of ten men and an officer, the escort nominally for my safety, the officer confessedly to watch my proceedings. A trim, silent, and much-enduring man that officer was, but by the end of my journey he was reduced to a state of pitiable misery. He spoke nothing but Turkish. For my purpose he felt the kind of contempt that a man-about-town feels for a rescue-worker in the cause of "fallen women." He openly declared that the Sultan ought to treat the loathly, pig-eating races as the Spaniards had treated the Moors, or as the Russians were treating the Jews, and, like all Turks, he could appeal to other examples that struck nearer home. He scorned every

trace of Western manners as filthy and indecent beyond description, and yet he so infuriated my Albanian interpreter boy by certain proposals that I feared murder. His main duty was at every pause to write elaborate notes of my doings and conversations. Squatting upon his heels he wrote in the Turkish manner above described, and forwarded the notes from time to time to the Sultan. I have sometimes thought that Turkish documents must have a literary limbo all to themselves ; and among the martyrs to unread manuscript, my duteous officer is now perhaps wearing a radiant crown.

The Brailsfords and I had agreed that I should go round the villages reported as destroyed south of Monastir, while they proceeded straight to Ochrida, as being the best centre for relief. And so, accompanied by that uncalled-for escort, by the typical Englishman, and by Father Pröy, a humorous Austrian Lazarist of Irish descent, out I went across the high plain lying at the foot of the beautiful three-peaked mountains still bearing their old Greek name of Peristeri, or "The Doves." After going some distance we turned up to the right along a deep valley to the village of Buf, the first of the ruined villages that I saw. The story of that village may stand for the rest, except that fourteen of its 250 houses were still standing, and nowhere else did I find more than six, usually only one or two. In August, a body of Turkish troops were coming down the mountain, when a party of Comitadjis (fifteen of them) opened fire from a neighbouring hill-side, and then fled to the woods. Instead of pursuing, the Turks advanced upon the village. The villagers hastened out to meet them with presents of food ; but the first house was set on fire, and then the general flight began. All who could not get away were cut to pieces in the narrow streets. One after another the houses were kindled. One church was burnt, the other wrecked and desecrated. The armed Turkish villagers from a place at the entrance of the valley swarmed up to murder and loot. It was they who burnt the granaries and drove off the cattle,

and they who afterwards plundered the ruins of all the doors, windows, rafters, and woodwork that had escaped the flames. The inhabitants lived for many weeks among the woods and caves, coming down at night to collect any grain they could find. A few had taken refuge in Flórina, but most had by now returned to their own proper ruins, and were thatching over little shelters in the corners of the insecure and crumbling walls. The streets and the old basements of the houses were covered deep with broken tiles from the fallen roofs. The walls stood blackened and ragged. The stones were splintered with heat, the mud bricks were crumbling away or returning to sludge. Every vestige of woodwork and furniture was wiped out. As I stood among that chaos of destruction, I wondered how I should begin if the ruins were mine and I was ordered by the Sultan to rebuild at once, with snow and frost already upon me, no tools, no wood, no cattle for transport, no food, and a grant of ten shillings for completion.

So I came on to Flórina, a place to be well known to me again in the Great War, and, passing through several ruined villages, I climbed to the mountain town of Klisūra of the Wallachs, on the top of the high pass connecting Flórina and Sórovitch with Castoria. There I advised Father Pröy to make his head-quarters for relief, because it was a centre of misery, and when we reached Castoria we found that beautiful town to be Greek in race, and venomously Patriarchist in religion. Standing on a circular peninsula in the middle of a placid lake, Castoria was then dominated by a Greek Archbishop whose rancour against Russians and Bulgars was hardly tempered by adroit flattery of the Anglican Church, and a free-thinking scepticism acquired in a German University. For on the wall above me as I conversed with him, hung a photograph of a ghastly head, severed at the neck, and with a bullet through the jaw, dripping blood. It was a Bulgarian chief, murdered by a gang in the Archbishop's pay while the Bulgar lay wounded in a ditch. So little had the faithful pursuit of ingenuous



arts softened His Beatitude's manners or checked his native ferocity.<sup>1</sup>

Ferocity, partly religious but inspired rather by race than doctrine, infected the whole region. Since those days the world has supped so full on horrors that our sensibilities have grown numb and our hearts callous to the tale. There is a point at which the imagination of even the most sensitive fails, just as at a certain point of torture unconsciousness supervenes, and the shrieks on the rack or at the stake are silenced. So that I need not now mention even the names of the miserable ruins that I visited, or describe the pitiful story of their distress—the hunger, the smallpox, the life in caverns and roofless corners, the cold, the snow and rain, the ruin of small industries, the desecration of churches and of women, the useless search for bones and bodies devoured by the dogs. As I passed from one village to another, I estimated the number absolutely destroyed at 120, but we found afterwards that the real number was more nearly 150 in the Monastir Vilayet alone; and the population left destitute, which I reckoned at 60,000, was more nearly 100,000. Inured to mankind's brutality as history has since made us, I still cannot recall those scenes without a rage of pity and disgust. Nor can I ally myself with those (and among them are many of my friends) who now again are seeking to extol the Turk as a clean fighter and a real gentleman.

Nature has filled that region with the peculiar beauty of all Balkan lands. Interspersed among the mountains are stretches of open marsh and lake, abounding in wild swans, innumerable cranes and geese, and common gulls that have learnt to catch flies, like the kestrels I had noticed in Thessaly during the Greco-Turkish war. As I passed through the wide valleys they were brilliant with the gold, scarlet, and crimson of autumnal trees—aspens, maples, plum trees, pears, and peaches. In spite of the eagles, I

<sup>1</sup> For this incident and a further account of this remarkable man, see Brailsford's "Macedonia," pp. 192-4.

saw plenty of partridges and ducks, and many wild boars lurked in the coverts of the reeds. All the Turkish villages were rich in natural products, as well as in Christian spoil. To secure shelter and food for myself and that silly escort with its weary officer, I had to put up at night in homes of Turkish or Albanian Moslems, and certainly I was given food enough. In Castoria I stayed with a rich Bey, whom we afterwards found to be a secret Reformer, very helpful to our Relief Party, and after calling on the Kaimakam and the Commandant, I met them all at dinner again. Among my notes I find this record of the meal :

“ After the soup, we had a lamb roasted whole, and we all cut bits off it with our knives and forks. On this occasion the host spared me the honour of passing me up the eyes on his fork, as the Balkan custom is in serving the guest. But he tried to force a shoulder on me though I had hacked off a bit of the back. The Commandant, who had fought on the Shipka, in Bosnia, in Crete, and Thessaly, gripped the head, stripped it, and put back the bare bones. Then came seven other courses, while the Commandant talked of war, Father Pröy of his Lazarists, the host of the eatables, and I of all together.”

A day's ride from Castoria brought me to the largish village of Bilishta, where I was entertained by an Albanian Bey, and for the first time experienced the Albanian hospitality to which long afterwards I became accustomed.

For directly I arrived, he dispatched orders that every living thing in the neighbourhood should be slain, and for four or five hours we waited in silent esteem while the process of slaughter and cookery proceeded. Then, towards nine o'clock the dinner began : soup with whole chickens in it, a whole lamb ready jointed, a sheep also jointed, a hissing dish of partridges, which fell on the floor but were hardly missed, a stew of leeks, cabbage, and cauliflower, two sorts of rice, sweet cakes, apples, grapes, and plentiful wine and coffee. All through the feast a tall Albanian stood close beside me holding a heavy oil lamp. Another giant stood

beside the Bey holding a similar lamp, and when I asked if they could not put the lamps down on the table to avoid fatigue, I was told it was the Albanian custom, and the host only wished he had provided resinous pine torches instead. After a naturally wakeful but moonlit night, perceiving the minaret at last to be turning rosy red with the rising sun, while the call to prayer came from its little gallery, I was murmuring to myself :

*A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries,  
"Fools, your Reward is neither Here nor There."*

(for we were all very Omarian in those days), when I heard our typical Englishman explaining through our interpreter boy that in England we always have marmalade for breakfast. Under the circumstances it seemed a superfluous implication.

We came next to Kóritza (Kortcha), already the subject of dispute between Greeks and Albanians, as it still is. And there I conversed with another Greek Bishop, whom I described as "a soft but well-informed man, who spoke with eyes always modestly cast down." He was one of the Commission that had then been sitting for some years to arrange a union between the Greek and Anglican Churches. He had heard of Pusey and Liddon, and had known Sandford, the old Bishop of Gibraltar. He told me there was no trouble in Albania, but that Christians and Moslems agreed like little birds in their nests. This he said knowing it to be a lie, but not daring to speak otherwise ; for as his secretary afterwards told me, the Sultan was always sending spies disguised as Europeans, and no one could speak openly. When I tried a political question, he quietly refused to answer, but he denounced the Exarchists a good deal, and their Slavonic aims. He was murdered soon afterwards. Whether the Commission for the union of the Greek and Anglican Churches continues to sit I do not know. But I suppose it must have been with that Bishop's immediate successor that Miss Edith Durham and I played a diplo-

matic game some ten years later on my next visit to Kortcha, when also, as on this first occasion, I had much benefit from the American Mission School, in which alone in all Albania, the Albanian language was allowed under the Sultan's rule.

And so at last I came in sight of Lake Ochrida, to me the most beautiful lake in the world. Ochrida is one deep oval like a vast sapphire, surrounded by mountains, very wild and rugged on the north-west side, and it has only one issue—the rushing stream that pours out by Struga at the northern end and becomes the Drin of copious history. That day I put up at Pogradetch in the south-west corner, and walked over to the monastery of Sveti Naoum, six miles away along the southern shore. Only three monks were living there then, but they held large farms, with seventy-five labourers and a lot of cattle, so that they could afford to keep up the monastery as a guest-house, hospital, and mad-asylum, all of great service there. Just the place it seemed to cure insanity or other turbulent disease ; for it stands out into the lake upon a massive rock ; its building is equally massive, and the Byzantine church, built in small chapels clustered around a central dome, was the very home of peace. It was built in 1250 and decorated then, the devoted monks labouring at it so far away, while Friedrich II, *Stupor Mundi*, was astounding the world with his glory.

Leaving Pogradetch to wallow in the satisfying accumulation of stolen goods, next day we started up the lake for Ochrida, against a raging north wind which the boatmen at first refused to face. Owing to prehistoric vested interests, the boats on the lake have remained as primeval dug-out canoes with huge beams nailed on each side for balance, and are moved by three oars in the bow on the port side, and one oar near the stern to starboard. I suppose the natives knew the habits of their own waters best, but our voyage was not successful. It took two hours to come level with the monastery, and then turning head-on to the storm, we struggled past great cliffs where golden eagles, cormorants, grebes, herons, and cranes flew up, and I saw an

ancient chapel cut in the rocks by a long departed hermit, and still haunted by a madman who came there to pray. By that time the two men of the escort and my little officer were stretched at the bottom of the boat, horribly sick, and soon afterwards the boatmen refused to struggle any further against the perpetual drift towards the lee shore, which their three oars on the port side naturally increased.

So we were put ashore and walked the last ten miles into Ochrida town, where I found Jane Brailsford had already arranged a clean hospital in a ramshackle, empty old house, and Brailsford had just returned from visiting the utterly destitute villages down the course of the Drin. After discussing the situation for a few days and drawing up a report, I was obliged, most sorrowfully, to leave them there, exposed to winter, smallpox, and typhus (which caught Jane Brailsford in the early spring), while I returned to England to report to the Balkan Committee and to raise funds for the Relief. I went by Presba Lake and Resna back to Monastir, where I found Hilmi still seated in his *Konak*, pacifying the country. He would listen to no complaints or criticism, but only praised his own administration and the incomparable felicity of all who dwelt under it. He extolled the generosity of the Sultan's Government in granting doles to the ruined villages, and when I protested that nothing had yet been received and that the grant for rebuilding was ridiculously inadequate, he told me that a week had passed since I was among the villages, and his orders had gone only yesterday! He was eloquent, charming, suave, and plausible, but nothing could be done with him, except to induce him to take notes on special cases in the Turkish manner. Our typical Englishman, however, thought I had not been stern enough in my protests, and so at the last he indignantly cried: "*C'est une grande pitié, Monsieur, que vous avez brûlé tant villages!*" Perhaps fortunately, Hilmi, though he spoke excellent French, did not comprehend the remark, but murmuring "*enchanté*" and "*au revoir*" took leave of us and remained seated in his official's Paradise. His part as

Prime Minister in Constantinople after the "Young Turk" revolution against his beloved master, and then his Embassy in Vienna and his death, lay still some years before him.

Well as I had known my country before (for indeed, I had traversed nearly every county of England, Wales, and Lowland Scotland on foot) I think I came to know her still better in the following months of that winter. I now passed into the homes of the most varied people and classes, and saw the hearty North, the gentle South, the proud relics of feudalism, the solidly comfortable manufacturers, the sorrowful farmers, and the restive working men. London, Bedfordshire, Dublin, Woolwich, Leeds, Cambridge, Kendal, Carlisle, Newcastle, Hexham, Stockton, Farnham, Woking, and Plymouth—in ten days I performed at them all just as though I had been a travelling circus or a theatrical company on tour. And somehow or other I managed to tuck in a farewell dinner to the members of my fine old staff of reviewers on the *Daily Chronicle*, of which I had been literary editor for more than five years whenever I was in London. Other delights I tucked into those weeks, but of all that rapid wandering only a few points remain distinct in my memory. Best of all was a peaceful time in a Bedfordshire village where I stayed with two elderly ladies, daughters of a naval officer, whose blunderbuss, cutlass, diamond ring, and a miniature given him by Louis Philippe for saving a wreck off Calais were the proud delight of their innocent lives. Morning and evening they gave me the advantage of family prayers with their maids; and all over the house, even in the most incongruous chambers, I was edified by illuminated texts, such as "Thou God seest me," "Prepare to meet thy God," and "All our righteousness is as filthy rags." But sweet and amiable as they were, even to each other, I recognised certain points of gentle disagreement. For one of them had been on a tour to lovely Lucerne, an expensive experience that the other regarded with contemptuous envy; and while I was there she frequently repeated: "Did you hear, Julia dear, that Mr. Nevinson

thinks it is best to become thoroughly acquainted with our own land before venturing on foreign exploration ? ” To which Julia would reply : “ Yes, dear, and he is an authority, for he was out in the Boer war, and he supports my opinion that De Wet was the most remarkable of the Boer officers, whereas you have always felt an inclination towards General Botha after seeing his portrait, have you not, Matilda, dear ? ”

This speaking for Macedonian Relief was continued into the next year (1904), and led me to address a congregation from the pulpit of an Anglican church, for the first time and the last. It was the church in Halifax, then served by my dear friend, William Ingham Brooke,<sup>1</sup> his Bishop having given permission for me to preach but not to pray—a distinction for which I suppose he had some occult reason. The people listened in deep silence, but I learnt how much might be gained in alertness and attention if congregations were expected to raise questions upon the sermon, at all events after it was over. For there is frequently some point in a sermon open to doubt, and a questioner would always remember his question, if not the answer ; whereas our Anglican congregations sit mute and torpid, sluggishly allowing divine truths and human errors to flow indiscriminately down the channels of their ears, much like Americans submitting to a lecture.

Many other meetings we held—at Devonport, Farnham, York, Bolton, Liverpool, and Eton—but for me the most notable was one at Guildford. For there the great and terrible hunter, Frederick Selous, lover and destroyer of wild animals, was in the chair, and I have seldom seen a more attractive man. He was then something over fifty, and still about thirteen years from his death in his beloved Africa. I wrote at the time :

“ The only memorable thing about the meeting was Selous, who took the chair and spoke admirably : a straight and splendid man, white-haired, nose short and straight,

<sup>1</sup> See “ Changes and Chances,” pp. 81 and 336.

grey eyes singularly wide open ; as fine a figure as I have known. I spoke exceptionally well, for me, and we collected £60."

Our collections were strangely good. In all we raised close upon £35,000 in three or four months, and as we reckoned a pound a life, we may have preserved 35,000 men, women, and children alive. Whether it was better to keep them alive or to let them die before the sufferings of the next ten, twelve, or fourteen years fell upon them, no one can judge.

But though I was thus successful in gathering money for far-off Macedonia, that "ruin" of which I had spoken so cheerfully when I left the *Chronicle*, was now drawing ominously near. It was true that my friend, Robert Donald, had just succeeded as editor, and he graciously tried to arrange for me to write both leaders and special articles, but the work was irregular and uncertain. Early in January, war between Russia and Japan was obviously approaching, and I petitioned to be sent out again as the *Chronicle* correspondent, together with Donohoe, who had been with me in South Africa. Donald himself, always kindly disposed, was favourable, but after seeing Frank Lloyd, then the chief proprietor, he told me that someone (he mentioned his name, and there was no trouble in guessing it) had "poisoned Frank Lloyd's ear against me," and Donohoe was to go alone. On February 10th, I saw him off at Euston, and came home, myself poisoned with bitterness of spirit, to write a review of a book about the Roman Forum ! I applied to Gardiner of the *Daily News* and to C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, both in vain ; and so I lost my one chance of seeing the Far East, and learning why the Japanese are so generally disliked in spite of their great qualities, while the Chinese are almost universally beloved. I should also have learnt, two years sooner than I did, that the Russian bogey, which had distracted our foreign policy for fifty years, was but an illuminated turnip, and that the Russian "steam roller" of ten years later



would neither steam nor roll. In the end I became most grateful to the surreptitious enemy who "poisoned the ear" against me, for otherwise I should have missed a far finer opportunity than the Russo-Japanese war. But for the time the situation was difficult, for I had nothing beyond occasional work on the *Chronicle*, and occasional articles for the *Speaker*, then edited by J. L. Hammond, afterwards to be famous as the leader among social historians.

Unexpectedly, two gaps in the hedge of financial embarrassment opened, and both were due to a book that John Murray published for me that winter. It was called "Between the Acts," a series of scenes and stories founded on my own experiences. It was received with startling favour by English reviewers, and it ranks among the few successful of my books, ultimately bringing me in nearly £70. But one or two Americans estimated it still more highly than the English, and especially I may mention Thomas Wells, editor of *Harper's Monthly*. He introduced it to Colonel Harvey, then closely connected with the same firm, and afterwards American Ambassador in London. Sydney Brooks, also connected with *Harper's*, must have introduced it to W. D. Howells, the simple-hearted novelist, then about 67, exquisitely polite, clean, trim, and cheery, accompanied in London by a singularly sweet and calm-souled daughter, looking like the last lovable survivor of Puritan New England, as perhaps she was. So what with one thing and another, I began to gather round me a kind of reputation for writing, and both Thomas Wells and Colonel Harvey urged me to migrate to New York and work with them, if only for a time. With characteristic generosity they offered to transport me simply as their guest, but my natural love for my country and for some people in it made me refuse, though this American friendship bore fruit only a little later on.

Another result of the book had more immediate effect. Hallam, the brother of John Murray, was born with the sensitive spirit and skilful hand that might have made him an artist if he had not been bound to the famous firm. As an

amateur, he was a water-colour painter of exceptional talent, and he naturally wished to publish his drawings of scenes and architecture in France and Italy, if he could find a suitable man to write a text to them. In kindly admiration of "Between the Acts" and "The Plea of Pan," which the same firm had published a year or two before, he asked me if I would follow the course of selected pictures through France and Italy, and write on the scenes as I pleased. I refused the Italian part, knowing little of the language or the history, except in Dante, but I joyfully accepted the French. And so in May (1904) I set out from Havre to journey through that attractive country, with little beside a map and a cycle. It was a pleasing time I had—no danger, plenty to eat in every village, an amiable people, friendly to every stranger who carried bits of gold, and the whole country suffused with a divine light that I think is peculiar to France and Greece—to France and Greece in spring.

How could one describe the joy of that "foreign exploration" (to use the phrase of my Cranford lady)? Through the old cities of Normandy, standing in a country so like the most gracious parts of Southern England, I rode, and then, first touching at Le Mans with its church and ancient glass, I issued into the exuberant fertility of Touraine, the very home of human happiness. For there the land with motherly simplicity offers to all her children the old symbolic gifts of bread and wine. If they but labour in healthy measure, they are fed. And for holidays Touraine is just such a land as Gargantua (who was there conceived) was turned out upon by his wise tutor "to divert him from too vehement intension of the spirit." For once a month, upon some fair and pellucid morning, he would pass into the country, and there spend all day long in the greatest cheer that could be devised, sporting, making merry, drinking healths, playing, singing, dancing, tumbling in some fair meadow, unnesting of sparrows, taking of quails, and fishing for frogs and crabs. He who has seen a quiet and civil burgher of Touraine setting off with rod and basket to his

fishing at dawn, while still the white mist lies upon the river and meadows, need go no further for a vision of tranquil joy.<sup>1</sup>

But the waters of Touraine were my greatest joy—the waters sliding under ancient walls. In Virgil's passionate description of Italy, breathing the very spirit of the true patriotism that yearns with proud affection over a native land, we read on with growing excitement, slowly passing the great words in succession, till we reach the towns piled upon dizzy cliffs, and then float into a scene more enchanted even than towns like those :

*"Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros."*

Those rivers sliding under ancient walls have always seemed to me the very height of romantic beauty, and indeed Virgil was the first of romantic poets. Such rivers in Touraine are the Loire and its southern tributaries—the Cher, the Indre, and the Vienne. The Loire gurgles against magic islands—yellow banks of stone and sand, held together by loose-strife and willow-herb, but so shifting that they serve as happy No-man's-lands for the birds. The tributaries wander through lengths of poplared meadows with an almost noiseless stream, showing its strength only by the swirling eddies of the current, or by the tremulous movement of the reeds, and from none of the castles and ancient walls are the murmur and stir of living water far removed.

Why speak of Chinon, running with wine—a wine bush over almost every door—fit birthplace for the man who said : "I drink for the thirst to come. I am stark dead without drink, and my soul ready to fly into some marsh among frogs" ? It was "in the country of Thélème beside the River Loire" that he designed that monastery of pleasure

<sup>1</sup> For this and other passages following, compare my chapters in "Sketches on the Old Road through France to Florence" (John Murray, 1904). Chiefly owing to Hallam Murray's pictures and the charm of the word "Florence," the book had considerable success.

which contained nine thousand, three hundred, and thirty-two chambers, wherein "men that were free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies," dwelt in delicate anarchy together with ladies "so proper and handsome, so miniard and dainty":

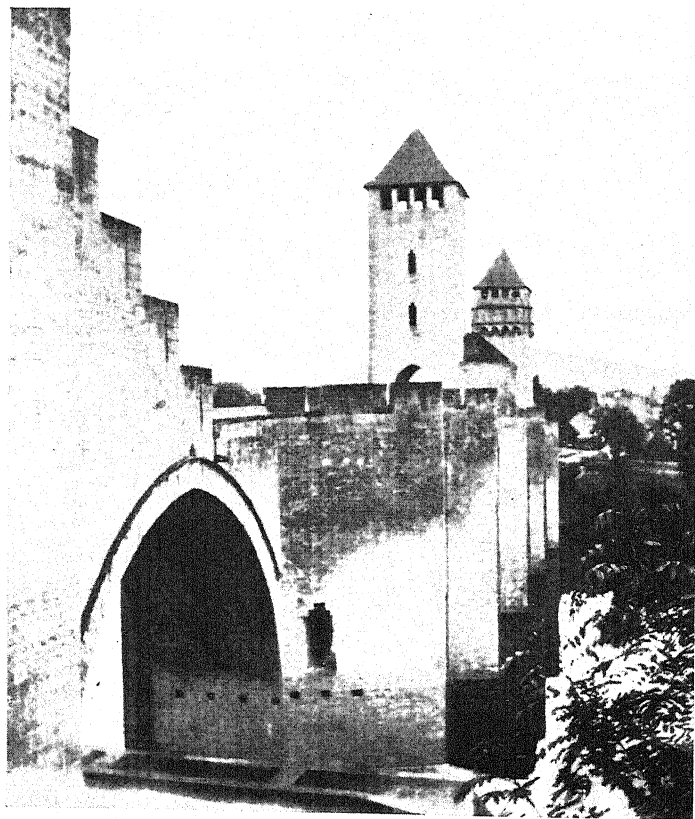
*"Fleurs de beauté, à céleste visage,  
A droit corsage, à maintien prude et sage."*

Yes, *prude et sage*, though the Pious Founder himself, describing their constant habits, has declared:

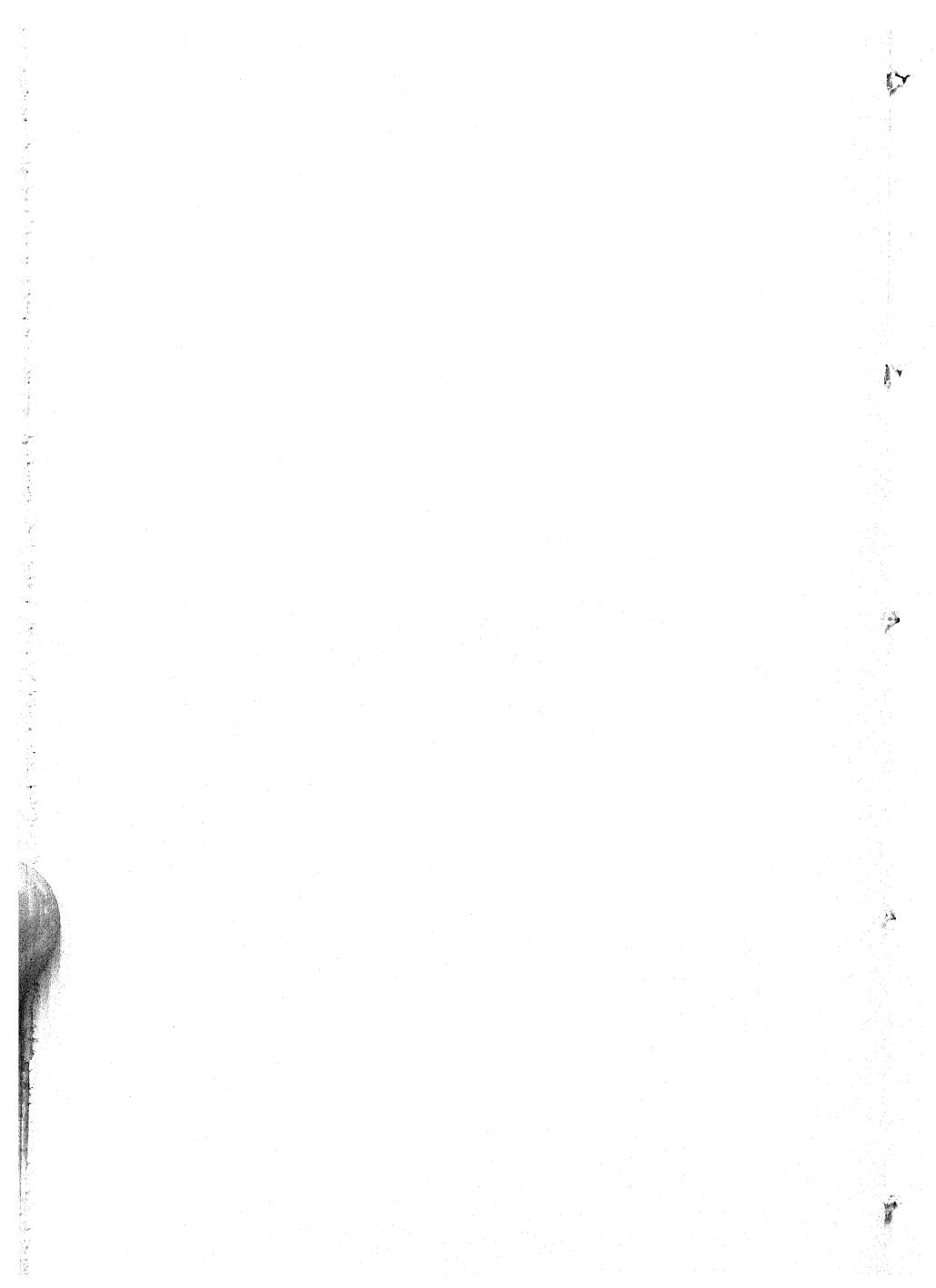
"All their life is spent not in laws, statutes or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rise out of their beds when they think good; they do eat, drink, labour, sleep when they have a mind to it and are disposed. None awakes them, none offers to constrain them to eat, drink, nor do any other thing. In all their rule and strictest ties of their order, there is but one clause to be observed: Do what thou wilt."

Some might call that an easy rule, but never think it! The rules of all Ascetics, Trappists, Flagellists, Lazarists, or Fakirs of India are light in comparison. I myself, at all events, who have consorted with Thélémites, and have dwelt in their great Foundation, have always found their mode of life the most perfect certainly, but also the most difficult in its perfection. And that was to be expected, for the beautiful is hard.

Rabelais did not proclaim his exquisite anarchy in ignorance of the State. Terrible examples had taught him its power and ways. Hard by Chinon, at Loches, Cardinal Baluc was kept swinging summer after summer, and winter after winter, in a wicker cage, just like a condor consigned by steamer from Chimborazo to the Zoo. Here the historian, Philip de Comines, was fenced into a little window's embrasure in the thickness of the wall, where a trellis-work of beams barred him tight, as may be seen to this day, and so he was left to meditate upon the philosophy of history and the nature of governments, while suns rose and set.



THE OLD BRIDGE AT CAHORS



Here, in a cellar scooped out of the rock below the castle, with but a chink of window casting a glimmer upon the opposite wall, Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, called "Il Moro," but also called "The Light and Splendor of the World," was shut up till at last he died. At leisure he had scratched upon that glimmering wall the words :

*" Il n'y au monde plus grande destresse  
Du bons temps soi souvenir en la tristesse."*

And certainly that great lover of art and of women had plenty of good times to reflect upon as he sat there in darkness visible and recalled the lines of Dante's Francesca. How hideous a life to be kept in a wicker cage, a window niche, a rock-hewn cellar year after year, while all that is meant by life in its glory was passing overhead, unshared and unobserved ! What power except the State could ever be so inhuman, so indecent, in its brutality ?

And how contrary, one may still hope, such methods of State will always remain to the real nature of each separate man or woman, especially in France, where Arthur Young, travelling just before the Revolution, describes as eminently prevailing " an invariable sweetness of disposition, mildness of character, and what in English we emphatically call good temper." This he attributed to " a thousand little nameless and peculiar circumstances ; not resulting entirely from the personal character of the individuals, but apparently holding of the national one." He made that observation while driving with the Bishop of Cahors, and from Touraine it was to the bridge of Cahors that I came, after crossing the low watershed that divides the tributaries of the Loire from the tributaries of the Garonne. That noblest of bridges was built about the time when our Edward III strangely considered all this part of France to be his private property, and so sent his Black Prince to trample upon it as a mark of possession, just as men trample upon their wives. Fortunately even the marriages that are made in Hell are not eternal, but perhaps the poverty long persisting in the

region of that little River Lot may be traced to those distressful wars. For Arthur Young tells us that the misery reminded him only of the Ireland that he knew so well. And on reaching Souillac, a few miles to the north, on the Dordogne, he wrote :

“It is not in the power of an English imagination to figure the animals that waited upon us here. Some things that called themselves by the courtesy of Souillac women, but in reality walking dung-hills. But a neatly dressed, clean waiting girl at an inn may be looked for in vain in France.”

That was not my experience, but riding south from Guienne into Languedoc, I saw the oxen dressed in decorated canvas jackets, while the women plodded about with heavy planks of wood bound to their feet, which seemed to me an inversion of nature.

Far away over the great plain, clothed with fertility, I could descry something white and glimmering, like the sails of huge ships just visible through mist. It was the Pyrenees, and from the ridge their nearest point was seen through a hundred and twenty miles of air. Castelsarrasin, Castelnaudary, Montauban, and Carcassonne—what grand names, reminiscent of grand poems and emblazoned history ! So to Toulouse, where one single church holds all that is mortal of seven Apostles—real Apostles, though minor, like the country’s poets. And thither came St. Martha, who was busied about many things, and in these regions accomplished her last stroke of practical business by taming the man-eating Tarasque of the Rhone, and leading him about by her apron string, with human limbs still protruding from his mouth, as may be seen on the capitals of St. Trophimus at Arles, and at his habitat in Tarascon. And Carcassonne gave me the very model (a restored model) of a perfect medieval city, besides an “Exposition Canine,” and the announcement (it was a day of stifling heat) that “This afternoon in St. Remy’s Mead, in commemoration of the Holy Pentecost,



a grand match of Football Rugby—the men of Carcassonne against the men of Castelnaudary—*Coup d'Envoi* punctually at three.” I do not translate that poetic “*Coup d'Envoi*,” for how poor a substitute would be “kick-off !”

Through the solemn Roman towns of the old Province I rode, and then up the Rhone bank to Mont Ventoux, which Petrarch climbed one leisurely day when he could think of no sonnet to write ; and so to the Popes' Avignon, where the golden statue of the Virgin gleams from the cathedral's western tower, with head inclined and outstretched arms graciously gathering under her care the city and the varied fields of corn and teasle, vine and mulberry, though close lines of cypress also protect the crops from the deadly mistral sweeping from the north-west and making all the world dance upon the broken bridge of Avignon. Next I rode to the blue line of dwarf mountains called the Alpines or Alpilles, on whose gentle slopes Tartarin practised his nerve for the Jungfrau. Upon their low summits stands all that is left of Les Baux, where once the troubadours sang, and princes in the Courts of Love played their lovesome games with ladies fair. Their dwellings, castle chambers, and even their churches, were scooped out in the soft, white rock, like the nests of mason bees, and I watched them being gradually hewn away to supply the “Arles stone” for common buildings on the plain. Only the quarrymen lived there still, and their lot was hard—hard for want of water, the absence of which those armoured knights and ladies fair appear not to have noticed, so absorbing was their zeal for love. But harder still to bear was a slow paralysis which strikes the grown men and the young children. Perhaps it comes from damp, though there is no water nearer than the depth of a neighbouring valley, or perhaps from the dust of the stone. A beautiful woman, who appealed to be my guide, told me of their distress, while she pointed out meantime the sites of the Tournay Ground, the Court of Love, the Queen of Beauty's seat, the Hall of Pleasure, and the chamber where a star descended from

heaven to shine above the deathbed of the last Princess. Two sentences of hers, interspersed with such information, I especially remember. After describing the kiss given by the Queen of Love to the prize-winner among knights or poets, she went on: "I am just twenty-four, and my husband is twenty-six. That is not so very old. I think one ought to have some enjoyment of life." And again, after telling me that the Provençal poet, Monsieur Mistral, had written "an admirable explosion of enthusiasm upon the Courts of Love," she added: "For me, no, I do not suffer from the same disease (paralysis). I suffer from poverty. Do you think that nothing?"

Down the river I came to the great castle of Beaucaire, whence the Paynim Nicolette escaped one moonlit night to Aucassin, who stood ready to confront with her all the torments of Hell. And so at last I entered Tarascon, confident of finding there at least the exuberant abandon, the gay flow of reckless conversation, that one expects in Southern France. Alas! how vainly one expects it! I entered a large restaurant, already crowded for *déjeuner*, but, except for the clatter of the meal, all was silent as the tomb. Each man was seated in his customary place, napkin tucked over collar, a bottle of wine at his side, a piece of bread to prop his knife and fork, but not a word was spoken.

A family-party in England would be conversational in comparison. All belonged to the race reputed to have brought conversation to the highest art, but amongst them I found the silence of the central sea. A Quaker meeting before the spirit moves, is not more still. There was nothing sinister or grudging about the silence. It was only the people's way, and I had noticed it in other parts of France, though in Tarascon it was more unexpected. Afterwards I discovered that Arthur Young had noticed it too, more than a century before. From Nîmes, so near Tarascon, he writes:

"Of all sombre and triste meetings a French *table d'hôte* is foremost; for eight minutes a dead silence, and as to the

politeness of addressing a conversation to a foreigner, he will look for it in vain. Not a single word has anywhere been said to me unless to answer some question.

"One circumstance I must remark on this numerous *table d'hôte*, because it struck me repeatedly, which is the taciturnity of the French. I came to the kingdom expecting to have my ears constantly fatigued with the infinite volubility and spirits of the people, of which so many persons have written, sitting, I suppose, by their English firesides. At Montpellier, though fifteen persons, and some of them ladies, were present, I found it impossible to make them break their inflexible silence with more than a monosyllable. . . . Here also at Nîmes, with a different party at every meal, it is the same; not a Frenchman will open his lips."

It may be that silence is the best training for speech, but I incline to think that, since a Frenchman unconsciously regards a meal as a religious rite, he abstains from profane conversation, much as a Scottish Presbyterian abstains from it in church.

Leaving the worshippers in their gastronomic solemnity, I skirted the strange desert of Le Crau, passed through Aix-en-Provence, where old Marius enriched the fields with innumerable Teuton corpses, and riding on and on, emerged upon the Riviera, nursing-home of the rich and sickly. For restful security and comfort, no pigsty could rival it. Admirable villas, hotels, and boarding-houses, supplied to the highest perfection with bathrooms, and replete with sanitary arrangements, extend along that beautiful coast almost without interruption from Fréjus to Mentone. The drainage of Nice boasted a system of automatic flushers, at that time unequalled in the civilised world. Anglican churches abounded, nor did the spiritual necessities of other Protestant congregations suffer neglect. Circulating libraries of English novels sufficed for the intellectual demand, and in every town there was a club or reading-room where the perusal of his native papers made the British visitor feel absolutely at home. I realised that it was possible to exist for a whole season on the Riviera without

suffering one bad meal or one external pain. But when I passed along it, the season was really over, and the sewage of Society was running itself clear. Villas stood empty, with drawn blinds. Flowers covered up the hideous verandahs, and crept through the gilded railings, but they bloomed for themselves alone. The pines on the headlands were free from picnics. Upon the luxurious rock of Monaco I found myself alone with its army of twelve privates and a corporal, and so was able to examine at leisure the costly cathedral that appeases heaven as a contribution from Monte Carlo's gambling-hell hard by. In the Casino I found only the most interesting of its frequenters left—the passionate worshippers of chance, the men with crazy systems, the women with glassy eyes.

And then, turning inland, I sought refuge among the precipices and mountain villages through which one could, though with difficulty, make one's way, keeping eight or ten miles from the coast, all the distance from Hyères to Mentone without once risking the infection of fashion or death. It was after such an experiment in happy and laborious deviation that I came out again upon the old coast road, just as it quitted the very last hotel and villa of Mentone, and there I discovered that not even fashions and invalids can altogether obliterate the solemnity of that gradual slope along the precipitous cliff as the road passes from France into Italy. But as I went along, my meditations upon mankind's love of beauty and his continuous destruction of it were interrupted by a grumpy representative of State, who assaulted me with questions in another tongue. And then I knew that I had reached my limit, and with all Italy in front of me, there remained only the most difficult task in life—the task of turning back.

## CHAPTER II

### LIFE AND LETTERS

"If I am told that an imaginary story ought to interest me because it is 'so lifelike,' I can but remember the reply of the Spartan king when he was invited to hear a boy whistle for all the world like a nightingale: 'But I have heard the nightingale himself!' he said."

*Preface to "Essays in Freedom."*

THE summer of that year (1904) after my return from France was for me a time of stir and excitement. It was as full of radiant and diverse lights as a bubble; iridescent and fugitive, but inspiring as a rainbow. I was occupied in writing the chapters upon my ride through France for Hallam Murray's book, and was still doing a lot of work for the *Chronicle* under Robert Donald—leader-writing, reviewing, and going as correspondent to manœuvres of army and navy. In August I was at Waterford with Prevost Battersby, J. B. Atkins, Norman Wilkinson, and Gerard Fienes to watch the first manœuvres at which submarines were tried, and to be taught the value of the destroyers known as "The River Class." In September we were all at Colchester—Atkins, Harry Pearse (the last time I was with that honourable correspondent of the olden type), Basil Williams, whom I had known in South Africa, and many others. And there too I again met Arthur McNulty, inventor of Chevril during the Ladysmith siege. It was an interesting occasion—General French landing an army from warships on the Essex coast at Clacton, and General Wynne set to defend that rather monotonous country by the tactics of the "Hedgerow School," advocated, I think, chiefly by Conan Doyle. Alas! the Hedgerow tactics collapsed, for our familiar brambles and thorns proved more useful as concealment for the attacking force

than as defence for the defenders. French hurried his army straight into Colchester a day and night before programme ; Allenby dashed his cavalry round to the west of the city, sweeping forward like any Rupert ; and though I did find General Wynne sitting in a hedgerow, it was far away near Thorpe-le-Soken, and he appeared to have lost all confidence in hedge-ditch-and-rail, if he ever felt any. Even more disappointing, perhaps, was the night when I sat up on Clacton beach waiting for the first experiment in "wireless," which was to announce the approach of the invading fleet far out at sea. At last a tremulous signal came. In great excitement I ran out into the chill and misty dawn, and beheld the fleet quietly lying in the offing, well within sight, and almost within hail.

But the two sets of manoeuvres were only episodes in a series of delightful and astonishing weeks. To my surprise I found myself moving in new circles—new literary circles which I had long regarded with awe as inaccessible. I renewed my friendship with W. B. Yeats, and had the great advantage of listening to many of his characteristic monologues ; as when, after speaking of the heroism displayed by the Japanese in the war, he discussed the possibility of belief in an immortal world to which artists, poets, and all men of genius confidently make appeal. Happiness and comfort in this world, he thought, are easy ; it is the conviction of a Platonic world beyond these limits that makes fine action. And as an instance he gave John Stuart Mill's choice of death rather than allow trees where the wakeful nightingales kept singing to be cut down. Many other points of solemn interest he discussed, or rather projected into the air, as his manner was. For he was at that time producing his obscure and alluring drama, "Where There is Nothing," which I witnessed with him towards the end of June, two nights after I had heard Maud Gonne, in all her amazing beauty, speak on Ireland side by side with John O'Leary, of whom I noted that, "though too old and feeble and wandering for speech, he was listened to in

absolute silence as being 'the Hero' " <sup>1</sup> In the August of that summer too I joyfully accompanied a great pilgrimage from Westport to the summit of Croagh Patrick, William O'Brien and the Bishop of Tuam being of the company. But most of the pilgrims were women great with child, that pilgrimage being especially efficacious for their condition. Some flung themselves prostrate upon the corrugated-iron roof of St. Patrick's hut or chapel. Others with bare feet walked round and round the mountain peak telling their beads. One proudly pointed out to me the small lakes at the mountain's foot as "the receptacles of the serpents" when the Saint exorcised them from that land so distressful in all but snakes.

But the Irish circle had been as open to me as is possible to an Englishman for seven years already. It was new literary circles that seemed to open now, and I do not know why, unless it was a certain literary appreciation I had won through the kindly reviews of "Between the Acts." The Brailsfords had returned from their great service in Macedonia, and round them was gathered a number of friends partly journalistic, partly artistic, partly Russian. And in Fleet Street or Kensington there were the more definitely literary people represented by Lewis Hind, J. L. Hammond (still editing the *Speaker*), Maurice Hewlett, Violet Hunt, Ella d'Arcy, Alice Meynell, Max Beerbohm, H. G. Wells, Evelyn Sharp, L. F. Austin, and many more, with some of whom I became friendly, and with others intimate. I can give no definite reason for this change—this sudden advance—but it made that summer very pleasant and exhilarating; perhaps the most exhilarating time of my maturity. On looking back, I perceive that during those months I was on the way to becoming a literary man. I might indeed have become one but for an unexpected event which overcame that flattering and insidious temptation.

Once again, as seven years before, the choice appeared to lie between "life" and "literature," which I was rather

<sup>1</sup> See "Changes and Chances," pp. 209-211.

dismayed to find that all my literary friends identified with the writing of novels. I felt that this limitation of literature and its separation from "life" were really false. I wondered if it were not possible to add the sharp reality of strong and active experience to the imaginative powers so carefully cultivated in the cloisters of literary seclusion, where my admired friends either converted their acquaintances into "copy," or evolved a peculiar world from their own secretions, as a spider spins her web. And, upon looking around at the literary world, I thought I perceived in George Meredith a writer of imaginative power who had retained his grip upon the hard realities of external things, and who, in spite of his seclusion in Surrey among comfortable and even slightly aristocratic society, had not allowed his perception or his sympathies to be dulled toward the inartistic and disturbing movements of life outside, nor heard with a disdainful smile the long and complicated annals of this common world. Through the kind offices of Edward Clodd, I had become acquainted with him some years before,<sup>1</sup> and I was glad when Robert Donald asked me to go down to Box Hill and consult him upon the political situation, which was then (June, 1904) working up to the great Liberal revival of eighteen months later. He received me alone in his little house at the foot of the hill. His deafness was almost complete, but through an Hellenic respect for bodily beauty he resolutely refused the aid of an ear-trumpet. The lower limbs were paralysed and completely helpless, but, probably for the same motive, he refused all assistance in moving except from his nurse, whom he humorously addressed as "Adelaidè," long drawn out as in Beethoven's song. His head was fine as ever, though the under-eyelids drooped a little. The white hair was still thick. The great voice still rolled the great words from a mouth that opened wide as the mouth of a Greek tragic mask.

He took the same delight in his own grand phrases,

<sup>1</sup> See "Changes and Chances," pp. 306, 307.



emerging like whales from the sea ; and he expected me to take the same delight, which I should have done, had not his own delight been quite so obvious. As he knew I was coming, he had probably thought over the subject, and some of the superb sentences were laid ready in store. But the grandeur of his manner was finely tempered by the consideration with which he accepted any remark or question that I contrived to make him hear by shouting. Edward Clodd arrived after the first hour, but the great monologue continued for about two hours longer, and as I did not care to take notes, I found it difficult to recover the substance and order, though Clodd gave me his assistance on the train going back. However, the *Chronicle* printed three or four columns of my recollection, and as Meredith went carefully through the proofs himself, and said he was satisfied, I suppose I got the whole thing fairly right. A few extracts are still worth reading. "After compliments," as they say in the East, he began upon a line more intimate than was usual with him :

"Since this last illness," he said, "I have felt a peculiar disinclination for work of all kinds. The thought of taking up a pen is quite abhorrent. I am as receptive as ever ; I read, and enjoy hearing of new things. But my mind seems now as if it could not give out any more. . . .

"Besides, who really cares for what I say ? The English people know nothing about me. There has always been something antipathetic between them and me. With book after book it was always the same outcry of censure and disapproval. The first time or two I minded it. Then I determined to disregard what people said altogether, and since that I have written only to please myself. But even if you could tell the world all I think, no one would listen.

"It must have been a great disappointment to you not to go to Japan for this war. It was a great pity you could not go. Much as you have seen, it would have been a bigger thing than all else to have witnessed that remarkable people carrying out their campaign. They are a people capable of great ideas and at the same time of exact mastery of detail. They have never botched or muddled. Besides, they are an

artistic people, full of invention ; and the whole race feels a genuine love of nature—a sense of the beauty of landscape and flowers. The English people have little real love of nature. The highest English ideal of beauty in nature is the southerly wind and cloudy sky that proclaim it a hunting morn."

After saying that he was not troubled at the thought of a European race being defeated by Asiatics, for, with their Buddhism, self-devotion, fearlessness of death, and artistic sense, the Japanese might very well be a more valuable race than the Russians from nature's point of view, he continued :

"Yes, certainly, fearlessness of death is a necessary quality. It is essential for manliness. Doctors and parsons are doing a lot of harm by increasing the fear of death and making the English less manly. No one should consider death or think of it as worse than going from one room into another. The greatest of political writers has said, 'despise your life and you are master of the lives of others.' Philosophy would say, 'conquer the fear of death and you are put into possession of your life.' I was a very timid and sensitive boy. I was frightened of everything : I could not endure to be left alone. But when I came to be eighteen, I looked round the world (so far as a youth of eighteen can look) and determined not to be afraid again. Since then I have had no fear of death. Every night when I go to bed I know I may not arise from it. That is nothing to me. I hope I shall die with a good laugh, like the old French woman. The curé came wailing to her about her salvation, and she told him her best improper story and died.

"The God of nature and human nature does not dislike humour, you may be sure, and would rather hear it in extremity than the formless official drone. Let us believe in a hearty God, one to love more than to fear."

His tone then changed a little, and, rather as if in soliloquy, he passed into regions more remote :

"There is Pan," he said, "you know something about him too. He has always been very close to me. He is everywhere—so is the devil, who was framed on the model of him

ventions; and the whole race feels a genuine love of nature, a sense of the beauty of landscape and flowers. The English people have a love for nature at heart. The highest English ideal of beauty in nature is the south, - only wind and cloudy sky that proclaim it a hunting morning. Of course, there have been a few great writers who have done better than that, and their influence is slowly spreading downwards. Oh, yes; people are improving. The whole world is improving - I am a little doubtful about the English race.

doubtful about the English race. I have seen the English nation by Asiatics, that does not trouble me in the least. Nature gives free play for the best to win. We think of the Russians chiefly as dogged and stupid, but I have no objection to my race. If the Russians had been really dogged and wanted to come on, I cannot believe that fellows of the foolish class our officers are so fond of would have conducted any campaign. Of course it has been called especially the soldiers' battle. All our battles are soldier's battles, and our Army will remain a class of soldiers. I have no objection to a singularly un-intellectual, ill-educated, and un-learned class. With their Buddhism, and superstitions, reverence, carelessness of death, and indifference to life, they are a very useful Asiatic race, and may be the best that the Japanese are now a more valuable race than the Russians from nature's point of view. I admire them more than any other race. I am not a socialist.

Certainly, fearlessness of death is a necessary quality. It is essential for manliness. Doctors and parsons are doing a lot of harm by increasing the fear of death and making the English less manly. No one should consider death or think of it as worse than going from one room into another. I was a very timid and sensitive boy. I was frightened of everything; I could not endure to be left alone. But when I came to be eighteen, I looked round the world (as far as a youth of eighteen can look) and determined not to be afraid again. Since then I have had no fear of death. Every night

when I go to bed, I know I may not wake up. That is nothing to me. It is absurd to see two pictures in the paper. "Female student in car accident," Mr. Thompson felt and wrote the back of his crown, brain protruding. "What does it matter? Let it protrude. I hope I shall die with a good laugh, like the old French woman. The cure came walking to her about her salvation and things like that, and she told him her best improper story and died." He told me then changed a little, and, raised as if in soliloquy, he passed into regions more sacred.

"There is Pan," he said. "You know some thing about Pan, too. He has always been very close to me. He is everywhere—so is the devil. Now the devil is more thoughtful of England than the Christian God. He is more popular. But there is something much higher than the Christian God. Nature goes on her way, unfolding, improving, always pushing us higher, and I do not believe that this great process continues without some spiritual purpose, some spiritual force that drives it on. Change is full of hope. A friend of mine was lamenting over the sadness of autumn. 'Are you sad when you change your coat?' I asked.

"Newspapers and magazines are often full of exclamations about 'Pagan England' and 'Pagan London'!" It is curious to remember that forty years ago I had to give up going to church because I could not listen to the noise which I heard spoken there any longer. The persons there were noisy, and noisy they are still. One day here a lady called the parson to her dying girl. "Is it really urgent?" he asked, being very unwilling to go. Yea, the girl was dying, and asks for spiritual consolation, and he goes. "I will be glad to do so," he replied. And he then said, "I am sorry to hear of your illness, but I can say she doesn't mind dying." "Not at all," she replied, "if she has the rites of the Church." The reason why the poor don't mind dying, he related, was that they are deprived of the great advantages of the beautiful pictures, statues, excellent organs, and the like."

"The Church is like the Army now—a class of men without overseers. The clergy are drawn from the same narrow and incompetent class as the officers, and they get the same insufficient education. Of course, there are some good Bishops. The Bishop of Hereford—now, there's a brave man! Ripon is good, too."

the great  
et political  
will and has  
said - "Savior  
your life by  
surrender of  
the time of others  
Philosophy would  
say, conquer the  
fear of death  
and you are  
put into possession  
of your life."

The God of  
 nature's humours  
 does not dislike  
 your humour, you  
 may be sure, &  
 would rather  
 hear it in  
 testimony than  
 the formal  
 official sense.  
 As for betwixt  
 a hearty God  
 & our to be  
 more than  
 to hear

The Salvation Army  
might teach them  
a lesson, or, as  
Mr. McGuire  
suggests in your  
columns, our  
Railway Company

who was framed  
on the metal  
of him & over  
material  
structure.

This time will  
come for the  
sinner of man  
to see the  
resurrection  
God.



by our medieval instructors.<sup>1</sup> Just now the devil is more thought of in England than the Christian God. He is more popular. The time will come for the mind of man to see the veritable God. Nature goes on her way, unfolding, improving, always pushing us higher, and I do not believe that this great process continues without some spiritual purpose, some spiritual force that drives it on. Change is full of hope. A friend of mine was lamenting over the sadness of autumn : ' Are you sad when you change your coat ? ' I asked him."

At that point Edward Clodd came in, and the converse became more concrete and political. Speaking of the probable accession of the Liberal Party to power, he said he did hope they would look a little further than their Party interests. If the Liberals became " inanimate " (the word he applied to the Conservatives), if they ceased to be inspired with great active principles, they would necessarily cease to exist.

" Of course," he went on, " a certain opportunism is unavoidable in daily politics and in all great political leaders. We must aim at getting what we can, and to refuse to act for fear of being called opportunist is only the way to impotence. A politician who is not something of an opportunist is like a pirate ship which goes sailing about on its own account, but does nothing for the fleet."

He went on to speak of the probable members in a Liberal Cabinet under Campbell-Bannerman or Asquith, especially insisting upon the presence in it of John Morley, John Burns, and James Bryce. Then he turned to foreign affairs :

" There is one thing I have long been anxious to say about foreign affairs," he said very earnestly, " and I am glad of this opportunity. In speaking of a foreign nation, we must always try to realise what it has done for the world—the very best it has done—instead of always criticising and dwelling on its weakest points, or on its malevolence

<sup>1</sup> Apparently Meredith fell into the mistake (old as the Homeric Hymns) of deriving Pan's name from the Greek " all," whereas it means only a feeder of sheep and has no more to do with pantheism than with a pancake.

towards ourselves. The other day I was reading a spirited attack upon the Germans. The writer found their manner very distasteful. Well, I daresay they are distasteful, though there is still a simplicity about Germans that outdoes elaborate gesticulation. But instead of finding fault with their manners he should have remembered all they have done for the world—done as philologists, editors, scientific observers, averters of disease, or again as artists and musicians. Besides, they produced Goethe. I think there is no race to which the world owes more.”

He next praised France for her splendid literature, her arts, and, above all, for her manners. “France has shown herself capable of the very highest as well as, by fits, of the lowest.” And of America he said, “she has been the shrewdest reader of men, and has given us Emerson, that very great writer. The Americans have dowered the world with priceless inventions, promise of the great things to be expected of them, and they are a human, a large-hearted people, but very young, and hitherto perhaps the country has been too big for them.” It is interesting to recall what he said of ourselves :

“We will not dwell on our own virtues, but foreigners might remember that England emancipated the slave, and at a cost ; that she has been the example of free institutions, a light of freedom ; and that she has likewise a noble literature.”

He then turned to a subject that was soon to rise in importance for myself as for others :

“It is strange how many politicians still distrust the people ; and it is exactly the same thing with regard to women. Women are not trusted because it is feared they would make a revolution if power were theirs. But the real danger is exactly the opposite. There are, of course, women just as there are men, in whom nature is very strong. They are always likely to run on a rather eccentric orbit. I do not wish to blame them in the least. But for most women, peace is the first necessity. Peace is what they want for child-bearing and the nurture of the child. They have a

physical requirement for established security. I should only ask that all avenues be open to them to enter if they choose. They ought to be parsons—they would make excellent parsons. And most women have a special talent for pigeon-holing. They take much delight in organisation, and putting everything in order. They ought to be admitted into all Government offices—yes, I suppose including the War Office. It has been proved what good doctors they make, and there is no reason why they should not be barristers too. They would plead a case remarkably well. There will always be plenty of them to be fairly content with marriage and the care of the young.”

He further discussed various literary and journalistic subjects, and after compliments again, chiefly about my work on the *Chronicle* and in the South African war, we took our leave. Without burlesque it would have been impossible to imitate the style and splendour of the language, but Meredith was pleased with my summary of so long and varied a conversation, and lest it should be altogether lost in the remote columns of the *Chronicle*, I have here included a summary of the summary there given.

## CHAPTER III

### A LAND OF SLAVERY

"I am disposed to think that if his heart was more in one service than another, it was in this. For greater outrage upon God and man was never known than the traffic in sorrow and shame then beginning to weigh upon the public conscience."

*(Admiral John Moresby on his father, Admiral Sir Fairfax Moresby, who from Mauritius suppressed the slave trade carried on between the French African Colonies and the Arabs on the Persian Gulf.)—"Two Admirals," Chapter II.*

IT was certainly encouraging that such a man as Meredith—an imaginative writer then at the height of his fame—had been able thus to keep a hold on "life," hardening himself against the fugitive sensitiveness that amused me in many of the conspicuous writers whom I admired from a distance. But it was not Meredith's fine example that ultimately decided my future. It was a suggestion coming from the Harpers' firm in New York. As I have mentioned, Colonel Harvey (then, I think, controlling the Harper Company) and Thomas B. Wells (editor of *Harper's Monthly*) had said all manner of kindly and admiring things about "Between the Acts" and other writings, and now they wrote asking if I would undertake an "adventurous journey" for them, and offering £1000 to cover expenses, payment, copyright, and all. It was hard to surrender the London life just becoming so attractive and exhilarating, but, of course, I accepted. The difficulty was to select the adventurous journey. I thought of Arabia, but Doughty had been there. I thought of New Guinea, but Haddon had been there. The South Seas tempted me with their lovely islands and a people clothed only in hibiscus flowers; but Stevenson had been there, and though they were not yet



hackneyed by sentimental gush, the journey was hardly adventurous. At the price I could not hope to reach either pole, nor could I walk all down the summits of the Andes (as was long my dream). Besides, I knew that after a month or two I should sicken of any travel devoid of some definite object strong enough to withstand loneliness and hardship.

Suddenly the thought of the slave-trade occurred to me. I consulted H. R. Fox Bourne, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, and Travers Buxton, Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, remarkable men of opposite temperaments, agreeing only in their sincerity and tenacity of purpose. Both told me of dim rumours they had heard concerning a terrible form of slavery carried on in the Portuguese territories of Angola (West-Central Africa), and on the closely connected islands of San Thomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea. Mr. E. Torday, one of the most scientific Congo explorers, told me that similar dark rumours had reached him out there, and he painted Angola as a region of unknown dangers and appalling horror. Since Livingstone, Commander Cameron, and Colonel Colin Harding, few Europeans, except Portuguese traders, he said, had ever traversed it, and slavery was there carried on unobserved and unchecked. My decision was taken, for here was a journey almost certainly adventurous, and with an object definite, inspiring, and possibly beneficial.

My departure was delayed by the assault of the Russian fleet upon our Gamecock-fleet of Dogger Bank trawlers. For if war had resulted from that typical outburst of Slavonic nervous excitement, Robert Donald had promised that I should go out as the *Chronicle* war correspondent. But the wings of peace soon fluttered again, and the Russian fleet proceeded to its doom in the waters of Japan. After I had embarked in the Elder Dempster s.s. "Fantee" (Captain Tyrer) we actually sailed through that ill-fated Baltic fleet as it lay off the French colonial town of Dakar (Nov. 15, 1904). Four battleships, four cruisers, three transports, five colliers, and a hospital ship lay there at anchor, all

engaged in washing, their stays and yards being hung with drying clothes. I had some hope that their leisurely voyage would never end, but that, like the Flying Dutchman or the Ship of Fools, they would go sailing on for ever round the world. Otherwise what was the good of their washing? In a few weeks they would be lying engulfed at the bottom of the sea, as, indeed, they were.

Along the deadly "Coast," in steamy air thick with the smell of vegetation decaying over miles of swamp, we slowly passed, touching at various points, discharging cargo and officials, officers and traders, whom duty and the British need for soap and candles drove into exile there, or into speedy death. In exchange we took off barrels of palm oil and kernels for making those soaps and candles; parties of negresses with hair cut in segments like melons, and each invariably carrying an iron utensil more serviceable than polite; and gangs of happy Kroo boys, powerful savages ready to work the ships or engage for any labour on condition of being returned to "we country" at least every six months.

At Bonny we stayed some time, and at Calabar nearly a week, so that I was able to gain some knowledge of the coast, and even of the mangrove swamps into the loathsome darkness of which I penetrated in a vain search for hard ground reported as the haunt of various wild beasts.

Of the Coast as I then saw it I wrote:

"Nature has here said, 'Look, I will display all my powers of evil. I will do the worst I can. I will give querulous mankind something to whine about. I will silence the silliness that prattles of "this beautiful world."' Then she took stinking slime and for hundreds of miles she laid down the mangrove swamps that never dry, and covered them with deadly growths that rot under their own darkness. The sea that washes the grey roots with its tides she filled with sharks, and into unmeasured miles of ooze she crowded mud-fish that run like lizards, and colourless crabs, and long worms with innumerable feet, and pale slugs, and crocodiles with eyes like stones. Where the slime at last

ended, and a man might stand without sinking to the waist, she set a forest impenetrable to the sun and air, and bound the trunks together into a solid tangle of spikes and thorns and suckers.

“Into this forest she put deadly serpents and envenomed spiders, obscene reptiles, and scorpions as large as a woman’s foot. Then over swamp and forest alike, she blew dense clouds of flies and every kind of poisonous insect—the fever gnat, the gnat that gives blackwater, compared with which malaria counts as health, the speck of life that makes a man swell like a bulbous tree, and the speck that sends him to the grave by a few months’ sleep through madness. Savage ants also to tear his flesh as with red-hot pincers she poured upon the land in countless hordes, and ticks to suck his blood, and crawl-crawl to drive him frantic, and, in the sandy places, many millions of invisible jiggers to burrow into his toes and rot them away.

“Having thus prepared a place for man’s habitation, she brought the sun to blaze sheer down upon it for half the year, and for the other half she soused it in perpetual and violent rain. All the year round she kept it moist, whelmed in a hot mist that could be felt and stank of rottenness a hundred miles out to sea. She lashed it with tempests as with a whip, and with tornadoes she licked up the giant trees as a cow licks grass. With a sword of lightning she pierced the very blanket of the swamp, that so she might strike the cowering brood of man, and if for a while the leaves of the forest dried, she burnt the land with fire, consuming in its destruction the little huts that men and women had woven to shelter themselves and their young.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet even in that slimy and turbulent region civilisation had planted her foot. For at Calabar, standing on firm ground about thirty miles up the “Oil Rivers,” I found a mad asylum, a gaol, a hospital, barracks, a customs office, and a golf course. At the base of “The Hill” along the water stood the “factories” where dwelt the “traders,” the very people for whom the whole settlement exists, but separated from the officials and military up above them by an invisible and impassable social line. On the opposite side of the river, built on piles driven into the actual swamp, was

<sup>1</sup> “Essays in Freedom,” p. 107.

a "beach" or platform, where stood a German "factory," which the German traders declared to be healthy and free from mosquitoes and other flies. They were trading with a German settlement on the part of Lake Chad then attached to the Cameroons, but most easily approached up the Cross River. Anchored out in the river also was the hulk of an old merchant-ship still used as a "factory," the last of that kind which once was common. And down the river I saw the comparatively open space or clearing where once had stood a dépôt for slaves waiting to be embarked for the Land of the Free. But in conversation with the Acting Governor, Mr. Fosbery, I was told that slavery had been definitely declared illegal three years before, though tribal and domestic slavery continued among the natives themselves, and I concluded that this was one of those rare cases in which law was ahead of custom. I noticed also that in the background of every "factory" lurked a swarthy girl, often very beautifully formed, but hardly visible in the darkness, and I heard that such companions could always be obtained from the chief of their tribe on condition that when they returned home they handed over to him such "dash" or present as had been given them for their services. If offspring has been part of the service, the child was generally entrusted to some Mission Station (usually Scottish there) to be brought up. I saw specimens of this admixture—negroid faces and bodies, yellow curly hair, blue eyes, and projecting lips dull red—not a successful combination, I thought, though in some cases the child could claim high descent on the father's side.

Putting ashore in the evenings, I was sometimes entertained by the officials and the officers of the little garrison (only about 1200 men), being carried up "The Hill" in a hammock, because if I had walked that little distance I should have arrived dripping with sweat. I observed that only soft and cellular shirts and collars were allowed at mess, for starch would hang pulpy in five minutes, and sweat is one of the two problems to be solved by Empire,

the other being fever. Creek Town stands on hard ground, and in walking back to the river I noticed that the whole slope of the hill seemed to be turfed with a Sensitive Plant, which curled up at my footstep, and appeared to begin to curl with a slight rustling sound even before a foot touched it, as though the mere sound of my approach were sufficient to strike terror. (As a matter of fact, the plant ought to be called the Insensitive Plant, for it is sensitive only on the under side and therefore curls in that direction.) Wherever I came upon hard ground too, I was delighted with strange and beautiful butterflies, various birds (dark purple kingfishers, hawks, and long-tailed shrikes), enormous spiders striped with brilliant yellow and black, bats with fox-like faces, and a particularly splendid lizard, two and a half feet long, of a deep but glittering purple, with a brilliant orange streak along the lower back, and orange under the throat and belly—a really superb creature. Dr. Slater Jackson of the “Fantee,” a keenly scientific man, with whom I read all Catullus and most of Horace during the voyage, also collected some admirable worms, though his chief interest was the collection of skulls to illustrate comparative anthropology. Many years afterwards I met him again when I was lecturing at McGill University in Montreal, but I do not know whose skulls he was collecting there.

Putting out from Calabar, we passed between the mountain of Fernando Po and the mountain of the Cameroons, only the base of both being visible, the summits wrapt in cloud. In the wide but shallow harbour of the Cameroons we put ashore at Duala, the chief settlement of what was then a German colony. The place was well laid out, upon a regular and scientific plan, very unlike the haphazard confusion of Calabar, especially in the native quarter. Roads or streets ran at right angles. The residences of officials, originally built, I believe, by English Baptist missionaries, looked like villas in a suburb. The German doctor showed me a faultless array of the latest and most scientific German drugs and antidotes. Yet the white

population was dying with terrifying rapidity, chiefly of blackwater fever, and news of deaths kept coming in while we conversed. Everything that sanitation could do had been done. The ground was hard. Across the river rose the alluring mountain known to Mary Kingsley, and every prospect pleased. Yet the people died like poisoned dogs.<sup>1</sup>

After leaving the Cameroons, we passed the Portuguese island of Príncipe, its volcanic precipices wreathed in customary mists, and we anchored off San Thomé, wreathed also in hot mists and swept by tornadoes that made us shift our anchorage and drenched my cabin and the alleyways with water a foot deep. Nevertheless, the skipper, doctor, purser, and I got ashore, and so for the first time I touched that abhorrent island which was ultimately to prove the main object of my journey. I noted the town as "ragged, ruined, and old-world," but most of the day was spent at the Eastern Telegraph Station. There we found almost all the British Staff down with a terrible bilious fever, but one of them volunteered a certain amount of information as to the slavery on the plantations, over which the chief of the telegraph station kept anxious watch. For myself, I did not raise the question at that time as our stay was short, but was content to admire the beautiful small white herons or egrets haunting the oxen; for they have a peculiar taste for the ticks on cattle, and so are called by the natives "the buffalo's friends." It is the same species that our barbarian ladies love to have massacred in the breeding-season for plumes in hats. Tiny finches and wrens in shot purple also flitted about, like humming-birds, and the island looked beautiful in spite of its deadly reputation and the tornadoes then raging.

In crossing to the Cabinda coast of the mainland, we passed through little floating islands of reeds and grass, covered with sea birds, and the water showed greenish brown

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the Cameroons and the superb volcano twenty years earlier, see Sir Harry Johnston's "Story of My Life," pp. 150, 178, etc.

where the waves broke ; for we had reached the washings of Central Africa carried down by the Congo. We landed through the surf at Landana, and again, further south, at the settlement of Cabinda, where I walked up the hill to the Angola Mission (mainly Scottish) of which I had already heard as being maintained by a society of Faith Healers and very primitive, or believing, Christians, who had grievously offended the Portuguese Government, perhaps by their Christianity, certainly by their denunciation of the slave trade. There I had a long and solitary converse with M. Z. Stober, the leader of the Mission, a very unusual man—thin, elegant, polite almost to affection, and much inclined to pray over me. For he rapidly divined my purpose in coming out. He gave me much useful advice and many warnings, besides encouraging the rest of the missionaries (including a few men and ten or twelve pallid but persistently faithful women) to implore that “ help ” might at once be given me to overcome a raging fever from which I was then suffering. Except for prayer, the community never took precautions, and yet they died. On the way back to the shore I stayed awhile at the “ English House ” of Hatton and Cookson, and there, as on a later visit, I enjoyed at table the society of a chimpanzee, who sat mournfully on his chair beside me, using knife and fork with the dexterity and social grace of one born to the manner, and only at the sight of the wine displaying an enthusiasm too obviously Bacchic for a London Club.<sup>1</sup>

That night “ help ” did come from some quarter. The fever and rheumatic pains began to abate, and in the morning we glided into the mouth of the Congo itself, having San Antonio on our starboard side, and on the port the shining white houses of Banana upon its projecting spit of land. The harbour-master and pilot there was Captain Wright, a wrinkled ancient mariner, mixed Yorkshire and Dane, who had known Stanley’s men and felt a great

<sup>1</sup> See “ Pongo’s Illusion ” (in “ Original Sinners ”), founded on this delightful association.

admiration for Roger Casement, whose report on the brutalities of the Belgian rubber traders he knew to be perfectly true, though he had some hope of present improvement. When, under his pilotage, we had passed up the river through the whirling deep of Hell Gate, to Matádi, I heard the same estimate of Roger Casement and his work from a British doctor stationed there,<sup>1</sup> and he also detected signs of hope, maintaining that the abominations of the Congo were not due so much to the King and the Belgian Government as to the system of paying officials according to the amount of rubber they provided, always urging them to procure more by any means, and also to the inherent brutality of men left in solitude to command helpless natives, and suffering the kind of degeneration depicted in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." Many other points of interest I gathered from him, and also from our Consul, Mr. Nightingale, who had been long at Loanda, but now had succeeded Roger Casement in Boma—a man of open and pleasant manner, very methodical, keeping his records and letters of evidence carefully tabulated in the drawers of a large cabinet, as an entomologist would keep his specimens of insects. His account of the slave system still prevailing in Angola was the first I had heard from an eye-witness, and it induced me to continue my journey south rather than turn aside for a voyage up the Congo itself, to which some Baptist missionaries invited me. And their invitation was very tempting, for owing to the writings of E. D. Morel (then unknown to me personally, though afterwards to be so admired a friend)<sup>2</sup> the horrors of the Congo Free State were attracting much attention, whereas Angola was unexplored and unnoticed.

So, after walking up the beginnings of the railway from Matádi, as far as the first swirling cataracts on the river, I

<sup>1</sup> For further appreciation of Casement and his work, see Herbert Ward's "A Voice from the Congo" (1910), p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> This remarkable man, who twice surmounted powerful malignity, died in November, 1924, aged 51.



reluctantly turned back to the ship, and soon we were out at sea again, running past the low cliffs of the Angola coast. In the morning of December 16 (1904) we cast anchor off the Angolan capital of St. Paul de Loanda, the very spot at which Livingstone issued to the sea after his first great journey from South Africa ; and the very spot from which he turned back again into the heart of the unknown interior, simply to protect a few natives who thought it unsafe to return without him. Though all England was waiting to receive him with every honour that could be bestowed upon so heroic an explorer, he quietly turned back, and I suppose it was the noblest action in all that heroic life.<sup>1</sup>

With the possible exception of French Dakar, Loanda is the only place on the West Coast between Moorish Tangier and Dutch Cape Town that looks like a town. A church on the shore, called " Our Lady of Salvation," and dated 1664, contains on its walls a lot of old Dutch tiles, one picture among them representing a thin square of Christian soldiers, in broad-brimmed hats, braided tail-coats, and white stockings, being attacked by hosts of naked black savages with bows and arrows, while they defend two little cottages, from which two little cannons belch black smoke and lay the savages low. The scene portrays some long-forgotten battle in days when the Dutch built a fort or settlement there ; but from that small beginning the place grew, under the Portuguese Empire, into a prosperous city that would not have looked contemptible among the cities of the Mediterranean. The prosperity was mainly due to the profitable trade in slaves for the markets of Brazil and Havana, and perhaps also of the Southern United States, and when I arrived, there were still residents who regretted the suppression of that lucrative commerce by British gunboats about fifty years before. It was a commerce not only lucrative to the citizens, but spiritually beneficial to the natives themselves. For at the end of the pier terminating

<sup>1</sup> For this incident and his account of Loanda, see Livingstone's " Missionary Travels " (1857), Chapter XX.

the long spit of land which shelters the wide lagoon and harbour of Loanda, a Bishop, representing Christ and seated upon a marble throne, made it part of his holy office to bless the slaves in batches before their embarkation, thus providing for their eternal happiness in the next world, no matter what might be their misery in this.

But since this mercantile and religious beneficence had been curtailed by British unbelief and naval superiority, the city had languished and mouldered. The Vauban fort at one end of the bay fired its rusty guns in salutes, and served as a prison for Portuguese criminals. The Observatory, Botanical Gardens, Zoological Gardens, and Technical School were deserted. The Municipal Buildings had no windows. Three times a week a public band played the same tunes in the same order as they had been played since the childhood of the oldest inhabitant. Lamps in the streets had been made for gas, but were supplied with oil. The one drain was enough to poison the multitudinous seas. The cathedral, custom house, barracks, and stores were decaying side by side. The lower town crumbled in ruin and chaotic mess. But up on the cliff stood a fine hospital, the gift of a Portuguese queen, and, further north, a good cemetery had been laid out. In the hospital I saw many cases of sleeping-sickness bound to the cemetery. For at that time no cure had been discovered, though the depressed but scientific doctor showed me specimens of the tsetse fly which was justly suspected as the cause.

This terrible disease was then killing off Africans by thousands, or even by millions, but it prevailed chiefly on the eastern side of the continent, and except in the Loanda hospital and on the Island of Principè, I saw few cases myself. Europeans had comforted themselves with the belief that it was limited to natives ; but already that hope was blighted, for in the hospital I found Portuguese who might be called "white" suffering from its regular and distinctly marked phases—the nodding head, with intervals of profound sleep ; the loss of control over the emotions, so

that the patient laughs or cries without cause, the tears pouring in streams down the face, or the laughter becoming wild and ceaseless ; the twitching muscles, the swollen glands at the back of the neck ; the extreme wasting, or the vast swelling of the whole body (called by the natives *baobab* from the name of that vast and swelling tree) ; the desire to smoke, and the sudden indifference to the pipe when lighted ; the fits of bitter cold, during which the patient may fall into a fire and quietly allow himself to be burnt to death ; the violent trembling of the limbs, followed by delirium and a deep coma of unconsciousness for about a fortnight till death ends all. The terrible course took six to eight months to run, and sometimes it lasted a full year. The disease at that time counted its dead by cent per cent.

This disastrous plague had further increased the city's disquiet and depression ; for it reduced the supply of labour, and labour was already short on the mainland owing to the drain of natives carried off to the wealthy cocoa islands of San Thomé and Príncipe in the Gulf. In any case the Angolan plantations were failing, for Brazil surpassed them in coffee, San Thomé in cocoa, the Congo in rubber, and the sugar-cane had almost lost its value except for the manufacture of rum to trade with natives. But without labour nothing at all could be grown, and labour was short, no matter how rapidly children were produced by the "contracted labourers" or "serviçaes" upon the plantations. It was true that by the terms of the legal contract all children of "contracted labourers" were declared free. By the terms of that contract the labourer bound himself to work nine hours on all days "not sanctified by religion," with an interval of two hours for rest, and not to leave the service of the employer for five years, "except in order to complain to the authorities," while the employer bound himself to pay an unspecified sum in monthly wages, with food and clothing. After seeing for myself how that legal contract worked on the plantations, I still cannot decide which was the vilest joke in those terms—the limit of five years, the payment

of wages, the freedom of the children, the right of complaining to the authorities, or the days sanctified by religion.

My first sight of "contracted labourers" at work was on a plantation that had recently been sold very cheap (£600) by a British firm, who were ashamed or afraid of the system. I reached it by going up a little railway into the interior for about 120 miles, and then walking through dense forest along a bush-path closed in by tropical growths on both sides as by walls. The plantation grew coffee, cocoa, bananas, maize, and sugar-cane, but, as in all Africa where water abounds, the great trouble was to keep down the weeds of other vegetation. For this purpose the labourers were working in long lines, going over the ground with hoes—men and women side by side, the women carrying their babies lashed to their backs in the usual African fashion. Behind the line three white "gangers" stood, armed with eight-foot staves, sharpened at the ends. The work went on persistently, and in silence unbroken except by the crying of the babies, but now and again a girl passed down the line with a water pitcher. At six o'clock all stood up and returned to the huts close to the manager's house. There in a store they presented their "wages"—metal discs stamped with the name of the plantation and the number of *reis* to which each man or woman was entitled for work. These discs they exchanged for flour, salt fish in slabs, or (in the case of the men) for rum, which was their only pleasure except their women and a little tobacco given out on the "days sanctified by religion." At half-past four in the morning a bell clanged; at five all appeared in a row outside the manager's house, and answered their uncouth names; at five-thirty they were all at work where they had left off; at eleven they had an hour for food; at noon they returned to work; and at six they came back. So the days went on without change, until death came and the labourer was buried under a little heap of red earth, with his basket on top as monument. His spirit was supposed to haunt the huts for a fortnight, then to be dissolved in air, and so an end.

In spite of the children born to the slaves on the estate, labour was short, and when the plantation was sold, the "contracted labourers," men, women, and children went with it in block, without question. Obviously the difference between this system and slavery was only official ; that is to say there was no difference.

A Friar José Klein, who had been in the country twenty-four years but came from Cologne, fully confirmed this judgment as I conversed with him on the little train going back. So did the German Consul at Loanda, a highly educated man named Dolbritz ; so did our Acting-Consul (unpaid) Brock, who represented British trading interests there ; so did the Ulster-American missionary, Shields, stationed in the town, though he was timid in speaking on the subject, as nearly all missionaries were. The Roman Catholic Missions were paid by the Portuguese Government, and the Protestant remained only on sufferance ; for if they protested against the system they were liable to be driven out and to have a Catholic Mission planted in their place.

But already I had evidence on my own account. In the Portuguese ship on which I sailed from Loanda down the coast to Benguella were five little boys dressed in striped jerseys and running up and down the companion stairs on all fours, as natives from the interior invariably do. At Benguella their owner sold them very advantageously for nearly £10 apiece, whereas the average price for children was only £3 to £5. An Englishman prospecting for gold, with whom I met once or twice upon my journey, had been offered a gang of forty men and women at £18 apiece, and he did in fact buy two men and two boys, giving them freedom at once. But that was a few hundred miles up country, and on the coast I found the price of a grown man ranged from £16 to £20, and of a woman it was about £15, unless of course the woman had special advantages in the way of good looks, in which case her price was higher, as in civilised countries. Indeed, a traveller whose wagon accompanied me for part

of the journey inland told me he did not consider £25 was too much for the girl he had bought at Benguella as his concubine, though experts in the woman-market considered the price unnecessarily high. She was sold by a high Portuguese official, lately come to the country from Bombay, and in my account of the transaction, I wrote at the time :

“I was glad to find that the Portuguese official who had parted with her on these satisfactory terms was no merely selfish speculator, as so many traders are, but had deliberately come to the conclusion that slavery was much to the slave's advantage. In conversation with me, he observed that a slave had opportunities of coming into contact with a higher civilisation than his own, and was much better off than in his native village. His food was regular, his work was not excessive, and he might become a Christian. Being an article of value, it was likely that he would be well treated. ‘Indeed,’ he continued in an outburst of philanthropic emotion, ‘both in our own service here and in San Thomé, the slave enjoys a comfort and well-being which would have been for ever beyond his reach if he had not become a slave!’ In many cases, he asserted, the slave owed his very life to slavery, for some of the slaves brought down from the interior were prisoners of war, and would have been executed but for the profitable market ready to receive them. As he spoke the old gentleman's face glowed with noble enthusiasm, and I could not but envy him his close connection with an institution at once so salutary to mankind and so lucrative to himself.”

The best British authority that I met told me that all along the coast there was not a single plantation worked by free labour, nor a Portuguese house that was not worked by domestic slaves, and I found it so myself. From him and from others I also heard of lucrative establishments, especially at Mossamedes further south, where numerous children were industriously bred for sale, the parents being carefully selected as on a stud farm.

Upon our way down the coast the ship put in at Lobito Bay, the captain being bribed by a present of £50 from the British contractor. For the railway was then just beginning

to be built from that splendid natural harbour up into the interior and to the great Katanga copper mines, there to connect with the Tanganyika railway and the railway from Johannesburg and Buluwayo. At the time, I wrote that in twenty years this might be the principal port on the West Coast and the shortest route to the gold mines of the Transvaal. Twenty years have passed, and I am not sure how far that prophecy has been fulfilled. I cannot imagine British passengers landing in Portuguese territory when they might land at the Cape. But I have often been told about the progress of the railway, and no doubt it has advanced far towards Katanga by now. Let future passengers, if they please, remember that I was the very first man to land from a steamer in Lobito Bay. For our ship ran alongside the narrow landing-stage of lighters in 35 feet of water, and I leapt on shore from the deck, to be joyfully welcomed by Mr. Griffiths, the contractor, and Mr. Colvin Smith, the engineer. A little tramway then ran for eight miles over sand to Katumbella down the coast, and that was all the railway existing. But the engineer had just finished an iron bridge with one span over the Katumbella River, and the population, Portuguese and native, were standing wrapt in awe because it did not collapse when the last support was knocked away, as all had confidently expected.

At Katumbella the white paths that one sees descending the hills behind the town have been the main slave-tracks for centuries, and were so still; for they lead from the interior by the shortest and easiest route. But when the slaves had been rested and sorted out in the courtyards and stockades there, they were marched along the coast road for fifteen miles to Benguella, which was the chief slave market for the cocoa islands of San Thomé and Príncipe. There I stayed for some days in a gambling-hell (since there was no room in the brothel, the only alternative) while I fitted out for my journey inland. At last, after infinite effort, I hired a large wagon with twenty-four oxen for the first part of the journey, until we should reach the "fly country," where the

tsotse would kill the oxen, as it kills all domesticated animals. The driver was an interesting Englishman, who told me he had come out originally to collect insects for the British Museum, but had settled down to transport-driving as being more profitable than the national service in butterflies. Some hundred miles up country we came to a little kraal he had built for himself on the edge of the forest. There a black woman, slightly tinged with yellow, was rearing his dusky race, and in some ways he himself was relapsing into savagery. But, like Wordsworth's Youth travelling daily further from the east, he was still attended by the vision of what had been, and in the midst of his masterly knowledge of oxen, wagons, and forestry, he retained some memory of literature and even music. Like most people who have lived solitary in the heart of darkness, he was subject to fits of bloodthirsty rage, but he never murdered anyone, not even me, for whom he felt a natural contempt until I proved that I could inspan and drive the oxen, cook, and "doss down" under the wagon almost as well as he did.

In my ignorance I took too little precaution against lions, though they were increasing in those parts, feeding on eland and smaller deer, but chiefly on Burchell's zebra, or quagga as it was commonly called. Yet I never actually saw a lion, though I sometimes heard them snuffing and grunting at night not far away. I saw only one herd of zebra (a beautiful vision!), and came near only one family of elephants, who made deep holes in a dry river-bed at night, and finding water, celebrated their joy with a family romp, flinging the water over each other, stamping their huge feet on the sand, devouring the honey-sweet flowers of the aloe, and forcing a road through the forest, careless of their tracks. Leopards were common, but remained unseen. Various buck and antelopes were plentiful, and, happily for our dinners, so were francolins (red-legged partridges), and guinea-fowl, hard to shoot by day because they set sentries and run like battalions in defeat, but are often to be caught roosting on



trees at night. Eagles, bustards, parrots, weaver-birds, and many other kinds abounded, and very noticeable in early morning was a dove that sang an almost perfect minor scale, running sadly downward as though to utter the universal mourning of creation. There was also a large hornbill whose hollow booming was said to presage rain, and certainly rain fell at times as though emptied from immeasurable slop-pails.

It was the wet season, but for the first six or eight days and nights we had to trek through a dry country of bare hill and valley, where no rain ever falls, and the oxen struggle onward, chiefly by night, exerting all their strength as knowing the danger. Only at intervals one sees and smells patches of damp sulphuric ground; or one may find a dribble of water by digging twelve feet down. But for the rest of the journey I was never entirely without water for a day and night, at all events after we had climbed the long mountain ridge, vaguely called Humpata, rising to nearly 5000 feet above the sea and forming the approach to the great central plateau which sheds the Zambesi with its tributaries south and east into the Indian Ocean, and the Kassai and other tributaries into the Congo and South Atlantic, while the Cuanza has cut a passage north-west direct into the sea. When we had cleared the dry country, water was, in fact, our chief obstacle. But the wagon would sometimes stick, and sometimes slide down a steep place, rolling on the top of the oxen, or threatening to swing sideways and turn right over. Those were the moments of extreme peril, when one has not time to think of danger or of death, but can only do the right thing as though by some ancestral memory, inherited through incalculable ages.

Dangerous also were the deep pools beside the track that the immigrant Boers call "slaughter holes." These the oxen, who love to wallow in liquid mud all day when loose, avoid like the pit of hell when harnessed up, and rather than risk sliding into them they will screw the wagon sideways into the forest, confusing the whole team, and often knocking off their own horns against the trees, causing terrible

agony. One drives the team only by calling the names of the four last oxen, always chosen for their experience and good sense. If you want to steer the wagon to the right, you call on the two oxen on the left side of each couple and they push hard against the yokes with their shoulders, thus swinging the wagon to the right. You call on the opposite two on the right if you want the wagon to swing to the left. It is exactly like coxing a rudderless eight. And that is how you progress hour after hour in ceaseless watchfulness, unless you condescend to use a Kaffir boy to act as "toe-lead." But neither the calling of their names nor the "toe-lead" is of any avail if the oxen think they are going to get their feet wet in a "slaughter hole." Nor will an ox work when it rains, for fear of getting a sore hump—so very depressing!

Another idiosyncrasy of the trek ox is his passion for salt. If you do not give him an occasional lick of salt, his teeth drop out, and so in the wagon we carried bags of rock salt for his pleasure. I gave it as a Sunday treat, and by the way that the oxen came snuffing round the place where the bags lay, I am convinced they knew when Sunday came as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury. But it is not really an idiosyncrasy. All living creatures in that part of Africa pine for salt. There is salt in the sea, and there is salt in the salt-pans of Katanga, which the Belgians had closed as a trade monopoly, but I think there is none in the hundreds of miles between. Where we give a bun to children at a Sunday-school treat, a good kind missionary of Angola gives a pinch of rock salt on a leaf. Put a little salt water on an open track, and in a few minutes it will be ablaze with gorgeous butterflies. The salt of sweat attracts all insects, just as it attracts horses when they bite each other. Once when I was going on foot, I thought to refresh myself after a long march by putting salt in my canvas bath. In no time my little tent swarmed with bees, and when I got out of the water I was covered with them from head to foot, all sucking salt as they suck honey with Ariel in England. Next morning I laid sugar, condensed milk, and a bag of salt side

by side, and waited. A few bees came to the sugar, a few more to the condensed milk, but the bag of salt was so thickly covered that I could see no spaces between the bodies of the bees, and could stroke them down as one can stroke them when they swarm. Is it possible that this passion for salt is inherited with a dim memory of that immortal sea in which all living things had their first being so many million ages ago? Perhaps it is not only man who sings with the poet:

“I will go back to the great sweet mother,  
Mother and lover of men, the sea.”<sup>1</sup>

Where no salt was to be had, the Chibokwe women burnt a marsh-grass into a potash powder as substitute. Among the Chibokwe also I found that salt was by far the best small change, the next best being safety pins to fasten their little loincloths. Beads were out of fashion, and “cloth” (i.e. lengths of calico from Portugal, or, the best, from Manchester) served for large currency; but if a native squatted down in front of me, put out a long pink tongue and stroked it appealingly with a finger, I knew it was salt he wanted for a tip.

With the wagon I trekked through January and February chiefly across the forest plateau which culminates in a wet and bare plain called Bourru-Bourru by the natives, who also call the top of a bald man’s head his Bourru-Bourru. New every morning were the troubles—the drenching rain, the straying oxen, the crooked axle that had to be hammered out in an extemporised furnace, the turbulent river over which we swam the oxen, sailed the bed of the wagon as a raft, and dragged the wheels with the oxen’s chain. Five rivers had to be crossed before we reached the upland vaguely marked as Bihé on the maps. On the way we passed a few deserted villages, but hardly any inhabitant, the natives having removed, chiefly in fear of the slave-trade; for they lived in perpetual dread of being sold or seized and carried off to San Thomé—*Okalunga*, or the “abyss of hell”

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne: “The Triumph of Time.”

as they called it. But we passed a French Catholic monastery or mission at Caconda, where a few Fathers were trying to instruct native boys in useful arts such as carpentry, sometimes redeeming the boys from the slavers at their own expense. And we passed the important Portuguese fort of Belmonte, and the central depôt of the Companhia Nacional at Cayala, where slaves and other goods might be purchased. From there I walked northward through wet but fairly open country to an English Mission Station of Plymouth Brethren at Ochilonda, where I found F. S. Arnot, a missionary of long experience, and an explorer whose name will be recorded in African history for his work in the Garagantze region and his discovery of the Zambesi's upper course. I also walked south to Kamundongo, where the "American Board" had a small Mission under F. C. Wellman, who had acquired great knowledge of native customs and folklore. I think that Mission was Congregationalist, and so was the other Mission I advanced to in the wagon a few days later—the station at Chisamba, conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Currie and Mr. and Mrs. Moffat, all Americans. Besides two Roman Catholic Missions that I saw, there were about eight in all, and it was remarkable that nearly all the workers were Americans. Even the two solitary men whom I found far away beyond Mashiko, in their little hut at Chinjamba, though working for the British Plymouth Brethren, were themselves Americans and had studied medicine (that excellent basis for the conversion of natives) in American hospitals. Eight, or even ten, Mission Stations are not much for a country four times the size of Great Britain and Ireland together. But few though they were, the missionaries exercised some influence for good. Amid traders and planters whose very existence depended upon violence, deceit, and slavery, here were white men who kept their word, dealt honestly, and put the native's gain before their own. From end to end of Africa a white man's honesty is rarer than diamonds or gold, but missionaries maintain a tradition of its existence.

Criticism of missionaries is easy and common. It was surprising to hear a grown man teaching intelligent natives the Book of Genesis as literal history. It was almost painful when an intelligent native asked what would have happened if Adam had refused to eat the apple. It was bewildering to be informed that the Russo-Japanese war was accurately foretold in the Book of Daniel. It was perplexing to witness the marriage of a converted chief to one of his numerous wives, while the others stood round with his twenty-four children and joined in the equivalent to "The Voice that breathed o'er Eden." But I do not care to criticise people whose kindness to myself was so unbounded, and hospitality so ungrudging, though sometimes the limit of their own food was almost reached, even to the last bag of black beans and a few tea-leaves, already used more than once. Only those who have lived as I did for weeks together among the dirt and cursing of ox-wagons, or have tramped with none but savages far through deserts wet or dry, have been plunged in slime or consumed with thirst, worn down with fever and poisoned by invisible insects, could appreciate what it means to come at last into a Mission Station, to hear the quiet and pleasant voices, and feel again that sense of inward peace which is said to be a reward of holy living. I stayed three weeks at Chisamba, and many days at two other Mission Stations, and often when I went to bed, I used to think to myself: "Here I actually am, free from hunger and thirst, in a silent room, with a real bed and real sheets; but people at home probably picture me dying in the depths of a dismal forest while pygmies sharpen their poisoned arrows and make their saucepans ready, or a lion stands rampant on one side of me, and, on the other side, a unicorn."

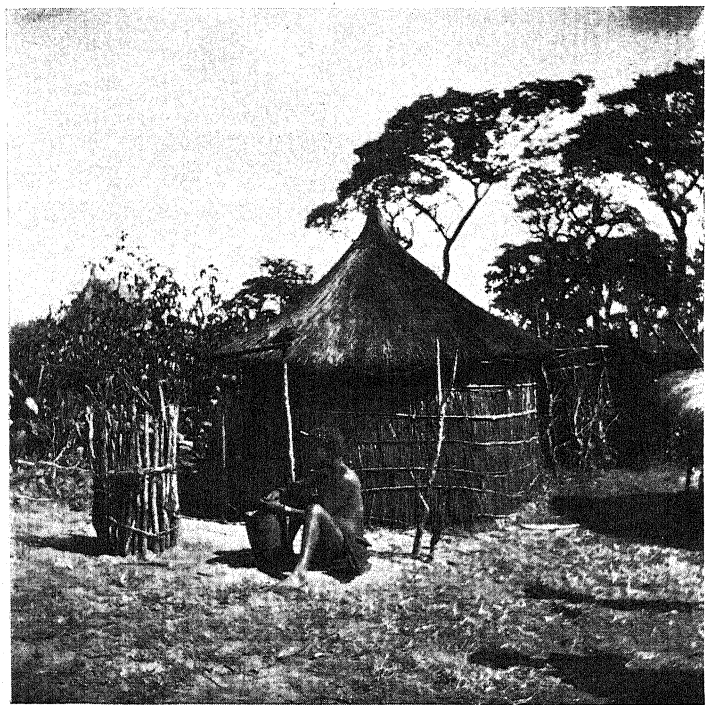
It is true that all the missionaries, knowing by experience the dangers of my business, used, morning and evening, to pray for my deliverance, and that was rather embarrassing, rather depressing. But, after all, it was very polite of them, and I was never the worse for their prayers. Besides, as the

transport-rider refused to take his oxen further than Chisamba, the Mission there spent much trouble in collecting a little band of sixteen carriers to complete my journey inland—half of them to carry my tent, food, and kit, and the young boys to carry such food as the others wanted for themselves. That is how young carriers are trained by degrees till they will carry an average load of sixty pounds on their heads for a long day's march. For their own advantage they will take as much as 100 lb., or even 120 lb. They balance the loads, tightly fastened, between two long sticks, and when my loads were ready tied up and set in a row, the carriers at a given word charged for them, all making at full speed for the food loads, because they knew those would grow lighter day by day.

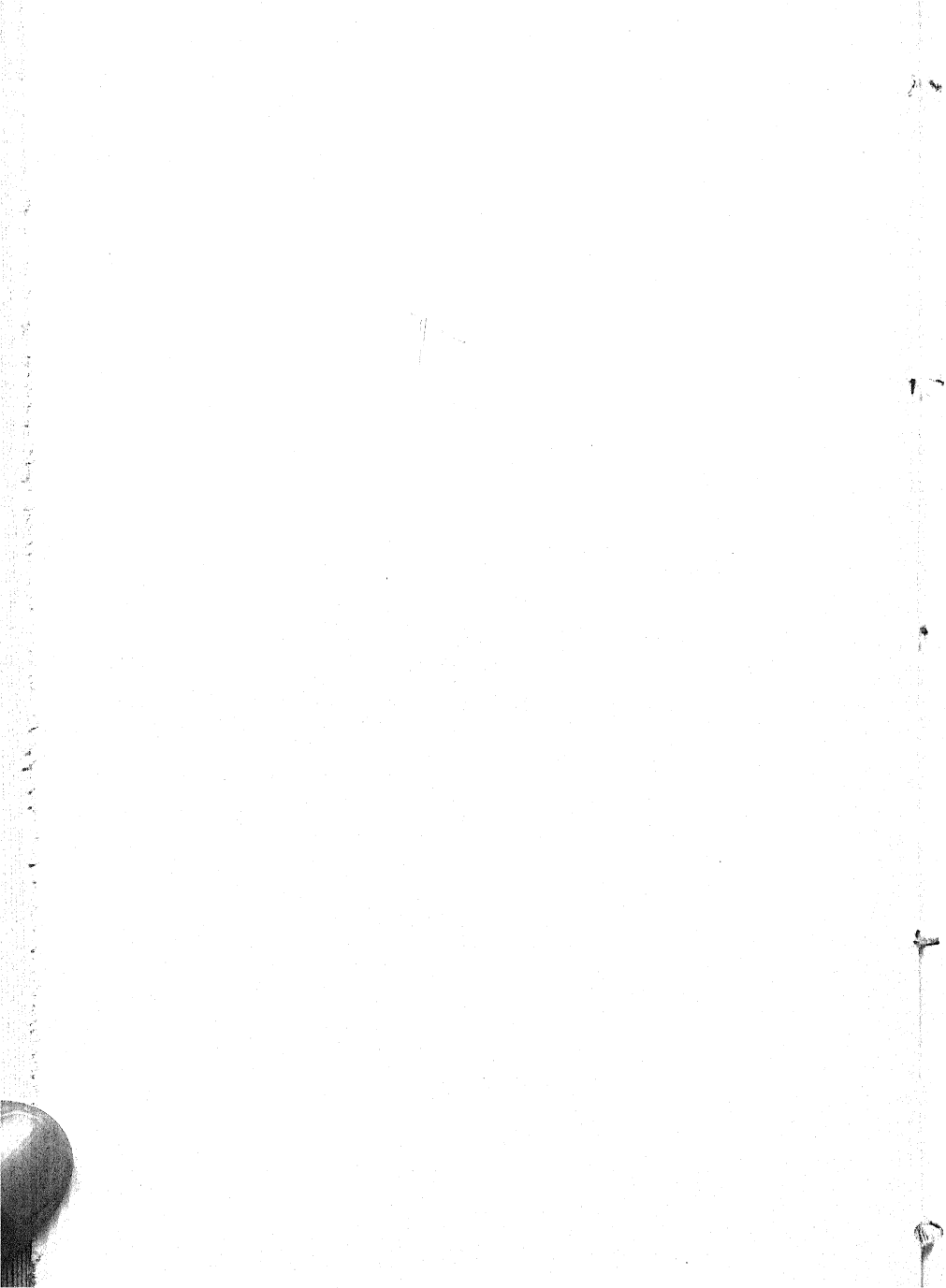
So we started in file from Chisamba, all on foot, and on the third day we crossed the Cuanza, there about the breadth of the Thames at Windsor, but much swifter, and full of hippos. A permanent ferry of narrow dug-outs took us over for the payment of four yards of "cloth." On the further bank we entered the "Hungry Country"—a long stretch of deserted or uninhabited land, sandy for the most part, but well watered and covered with trees. It was said that even animals could not live there, but I found plenty of antelopes, porcupines, wart-hogs, and other beasts, and at night the leopards snuffed and grunted and roared around us as usual. The country was believed to lie under a curse, and I could give no other reason for its desertion.

For myself, throughout my long journey on foot, like all hungry men (in Chitral or Ladysmith, for instance) I was constantly imagining the delight of a London restaurant. At one Portuguese trading-station I bought a few tins of English preserved meat, left there, I suppose, by a previous British traveller who had died. They were tainted with age, but every day on the march I used to wonder whether I could afford to enjoy an English tin that night. And yet some people have said I am no true patriot!

My carriers apportioned their food for the distance very



CHIBOKWE WOMAN WITH FETISHES





carefully, and if one of them fell sick or failed the others drove him along with whips or their small axes. But if a slave failed or dropped he was murdered at once, and skeletons that I found along the route clearly showed the gash made in the skull by the axe. The whole length of the path was strewn with white bones—the bones of slaves, for slaves are not buried, but free carriers are. The bushes on each side of the path were hung with wooden shackles, which had clamped the hands or feet of the dead slaves at night and now were useless, or were cast aside when the traders had passed the greater part of the Hungry Country and knew that escape of the slaves was impossible. From end to end the narrow path—so narrow that one must bring one foot round in front of the other, like a native or a baboon—was a road of death. My little party walked quickly, but the passage took us nine days. In the midst of it, one clear night, I saw the tail of the Great Bear twisting round above the northern horizon, and I knew that just out of sight were two big stars still pointing to the Pole.

At both ends of this Hungry Country, and far away on both sides, lived the scattered Chibokwe tribe, much mixed up with the Luimbi and the Luvale, who are rather more definitely savage and live, for the most part, further in the interior. These Chibokwe seemed to me superior to the Bihéans, who are traders and carriers, and appear to have diffused the trading language of Umbundu, which will serve one right through Central Africa till one meets the Swahéli of the eastern side. But the Chibokwe are artists, workers in iron, makers of spears, axes, and such excellent ornaments that the women wear little else. They use red paint, striping their fetishes black and red, and I have seen on one of their tents a real picture of a white creature, sufficiently like an ox, standing upon a red ground beneath a large white moon. They make the finest musical instruments—the *ochisanji*, a series of iron slats, each giving a different note when twanged by the thumb, and redoubling the sound if played over half a hollow gourd, as sounding

board. And best of all they make the superb *ochingufu*, a drum made of a single block of wood scooped out inside, and something like a half-open kit-bag or portmanteau. Knobs of rubber are fastened on both sides, and the drum-stick has a rubber end. The sound as it booms far through the forest is indeed portentous, and to that sound the Chibokwe and the Luvale dance all night long under the full moon, sometimes in a broken circle, as the Albanians dance, sometimes in opposing ranks of men and women. Probably, like many dances, the origin and motive have been sexual, but perhaps there is a relic of the totem in it too. For the great feat is to wriggle the backbone as much like a snake or crocodile as possible, and, though African men and women never dance embraced, I cannot doubt that this barbaric form of dancing is the ultimate source of the "jazz," till lately universal among the young barbarians of England and America. Teeth filed into sharp points may be another relic of totemism, for a Chibokwe's smile at once recalls a crocodile, shark, or pike, and though these sharp-pointed teeth are said to be specially suitable for cannibalism, the Chibokwe, among whom I lived for many weeks, showed no inclination to cook me, thereby missing the opportunity of incorporating my virtues in their nature. The Bihéans content themselves with chipping the two front teeth across so as to leave a hollow wedge between them. But the Bihéans, as I said, are a commercial people, and sell their slaves, whereas the Chibokwe kill their slaves when done with. Like all the tribes I have met in Central Africa, they mark the skin of men and women with elaborate and distinctive cicatrices, partly, I suppose, for beauty, as German students do, but chiefly to preserve on each a life-long tribal identification.

Before I crossed the Cuanza into the Hungry Country, my feet were already painfully poisoned by jiggers, ants, and other insects that torment all travellers on foot, so that at times the pain of a long day's tramp was hardly endurable. Sweat and poor food had also worn me so thin that my

Accra "boy" said to me, "Massa's face grow smally smally, and his belly stick in too plenty much." But more serious was the frequent recurrence of violent fever, with which the mosquitoes had thoroughly impregnated me within the first few weeks. I mention this in support of the Chibokwe sense of music. For I do not remember a time, night or day, in which music has not been running in my head, performed there to absolute perfection, though as a rule I contrive to keep it there, for fear lest people around me might not appreciate it. But when my temperature rises to fever heat, the music is no longer to be suppressed, and I give it tongue in outbursts of song—sometimes Schubert songs, more often long passages from the Fifth or Seventh Symphony. In a London hospital my fellow-patients have found this habit annoying, but not so my native carriers and the neighbouring tribes. For the carriers would stand in a circle around my prostrate form, their mouths extended with the laughter of delight, partly at imagining another's pain (a perpetual cause of primitive enjoyment), but chiefly, as I hope, in sheer pleasure at the sound; and when the Chibokwe came to the camp, their laughter was the loudest, and they seemed more delighted than anyone else. Never had they heard such music, for it was their first taste of Beethoven, and no wonder they laughed for joy.

After passing the Portuguese fort of Mashiko, I came in April to the collection of Chibokwe and Luvalé villages roughly called Chinjamba from the name of an old chief whom I saw sitting in his hut embracing a sceptre of carved wood. The Mushi-Moshi River (Simoi, or Simois the Portuguese call it, but without reference to Troy) runs through the district, first, I think, into the Luena, but ultimately into the Zambesi. In the midst of the villages I found two young Americans, who had built themselves a little native hut there, and were living on native food. Their names were Dr. Morey and Dr. Maitland—Plymouth Brethren, I think, but I did not ask, for to me it made no difference what sort of Christians they were. But they had

passed through the full course of medical training, and their hut was surrounded by a whole encampment of natives, who had come from far, having heard the fame of these white exorcists. It was pleasant to dine with the doctors upon black beans and unleavened slabs of millet, and looking up at the doors and roof and walls, to see innumerable bright eyes staring through the holes to watch the antics of civilisation at its meals. For then I felt that, like a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, I was combining instruction with amusement. Pleasant too it was to accompany the doctors on their rounds every morning while they treated broken limbs, bad insides, wounds, and especially the atrocious sores and ulcers which rot the skin and flesh on shin and thigh and calf, and arise, I suppose, from poisonous microbes in the marshes—microbes from whose voracity I have myself now suffered for twenty years. But even more I enjoyed the society of three kings, who had come for treatment too, the most powerful among them bringing eight of his wives and several children, including a fascinating princess with an enormous smile. I had pitched my tent in the thick bush near by, and every morning that king came, without any pretentious ceremony, showed me his goitre, asked for tobacco, and sat with me an hour in silent esteem. Like the other two royalties, he smiled on the religious services held by the doctors in the villages and the hospital camp, for he appeared to agree with our own aristocratic and comfortable classes in regarding such performances as beneficial for the lower orders.

There was no doubt that the lower orders thoroughly enjoyed them, loving the hymns above all. The doctors had been there only five months, and their knowledge of Chibokwe was slight, but the people had caught the hymn tunes, and over and over again they sang them without pause. Once a beautiful young woman sitting on the grass next me repeated a verse seventeen times—a moderate repetition but sung with conspicuous enthusiasm. Her mop of hair, the tufts solid with red mud and dripping with

castor oil, hung down her forehead and round her neck. Her brown arms jingled with copper bracelets, and at her neck hung a section of a circular white shell. Squatting on her heels, she clasped her baby between her shining thighs, and stuffed a long, pointed breast into its mouth whenever he threatened to interrupt the music. For her whole soul was given to singing, and with wide-open mouth she poured out to the stars and darkened forest the words of the chorus :

“Haleluyah ! mwa aku kula,  
Jesu vene mwa aku sanga ;”

followed by two other lines which I did not catch, but the whole verse was said by the doctors to imply : “Jesus really loves me ! His blood will wash my black heart white.” What meaning she attached to those mystical words I could not conjecture. Still harder was it to conjecture what the three kings and their retinue understood by the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel, which one of the doctors proceeded to read in the Chibokwe tongue. “In the beginning was the Word ”—what on earth do I understand by that ? What did a crowd of black and naked savages understand as they listened to so perplexing a statement in the gloom of a Central African forest ?

From the sight of the new shackles scattered at intervals in large numbers up and down the route ; from the gangs of slaves I had already seen on their way to the coast ; from the reports of British, American, French, and German missionaries ; from the talk of natives, and even of some Portuguese traders themselves, I had now gathered enough evidence to prove that the slave-trade, which had been driven underground for a time after the native rising, called the “Bailundu War” two years earlier, was fast reviving and now was practised almost as openly as ever. Accordingly, from Chinjamba I turned back to follow another route which I was told was even more frequented by the traffickers in men and women, and so indeed I found it. Changing my carriers at various points, I passed again through Chisamba

and Ochilonda, and proceeded along a main path over the wide upland till at last we came to a sudden descent into low country, where the vegetation was tropical again, and far away in front the mountains rose.<sup>1</sup> In the low country stood the Umbala, or Kings' fortress, of Bailundu, destroyed in 1896. It was a lofty pile of precipitous rocks, looking like a medieval giant's castle ; and after climbing one day to the summit, I beheld the king's throne of three great rocks, and also the heading-stone where his enemies suffered, the stone of refuge to which a runaway might cling and declare himself the king's slave, the royal tombs with patterned walls, and the large flat rock where the women used to dance in welcome to warriors returning from slaughter.

I was accompanied by a man from the Bailundu Mission (I think the oldest Protestant Mission in Angola) who had lived in the district while the last king still reigned in all the majesty of his Umbala. In the Mission I stayed a few days with Mr. Fay and Mr. Stover, the veteran founder of the place, a born scholar, who had translated the whole of the New Testament into Umbundu, and was versed in many tongues. This was the largest Mission Station I found except the Catholic Order of the Holy Ghost at Caconda, and my visit was marked by the discovery that someone (it does not now matter who, for the man is probably dead) had betrayed the purpose of my journey to the Portuguese traders at Caiala, who had been at the pains of sending messengers throughout the whole of Angola (I heard afterwards that they went even to Mossamedes) to denounce me as a public danger to be hunted down. To the Protestants of Bailundu they had actually written that I was known to be a Jesuit in disguise and was coming to undermine and destroy their Mission ! I have been unjustly accused of many things in a long life—violence, chivalry, compromise, and other nonsense—but that accusation of being a Jesuit in disguise beats all other absurdity.

<sup>1</sup> For an account of this view and of his visit to King Congo at the Umbala of Bailundu in 1876, see Commander Cameron's "Across Africa," p. 459.

From Chinjamba, in the interior, to the coast I had to make the whole of the journey on foot, and the walk for the last few weeks was of unusual variety and interest. From the deep-lying belt of tropical region we rose gradually into the mountain fringe that skirts all those parts of Africa. It is a good game country, and I saw several eland (that fine creature, more like an Alderney cow than an antelope) besides other deer. Lions also abounded owing to this food supply and the strong objection of the Portuguese in the forts to hunting them. The rest-kraals on the main track were strongly stockaded on this account, and the carriers insisted on crowding into them at night. They put me in the centre as became my dignity. But as the little huts were made only of dry sticks and leaves, and the carriers always lighted a fire in each, the risk of being roasted alive seemed to me greater than the risk of being devoured raw by lions. For a wandering spark might have set the whole kraal ablaze, and the stockade would have prevented escape. So after enduring this extreme peril for one night, I pitched my tent for the future outside the kraals, feeling fairly sure (not quite sure) that the lions whom I heard grunting and mooing at some distance, as though they smelt the blood of an Englishman, would think twice before venturing into the maze of ropes that supported the tent.

Every dawn it was a relief to reflect that I had been right; all the greater relief because my rifle had been hopelessly jammed for months, though I took care not to tell anyone about this disaster, and I always carried the rifle in a dignified and threatening manner. Once, however, I was nearly betrayed. For while my carriers were plodding at wide intervals along the track, as their habit was, a native policeman or messenger from a fort, shot at one of them with an ancient gun, studded with brass nails—a "Lazarino," they call it—and sent a cube of copper through the hand that was balancing a food-box on the man's head. It missed the head only by a few inches, and the other carriers, throwing down their loads, caught the criminal and

held him till I came up. They had taken his gun and axe, and stood round him clamouring for blood. I felt I must "make an example," though I am not a born executioner. So I set him—a big Luvale man with sharply filed teeth—in the centre of a half-circle of carriers, and standing opposite I went through the loading motions with my rifle. The wretched creature turned deep olive-green with terror, and I bandaged his eyes with a handkerchief, being resolved to catch him a sharp drive with the butt upon the forehead, which would inspire all the salutary effects of capital punishment without the irremediable result. Standing back, I slowly raised the rifle and appeared to be taking aim when three or four of the carriers rushed upon me, knocked up the muzzle, and implored me not to shoot because the vengeance of the Portuguese in the neighbouring fort would fall upon us all. They then stripped the policeman of what he had on (not much to be sure), and beating him with the backs of their little axes, drove him off naked into the forest. The reprieve was almost as great a relief to me as to him, and I proceeded on my way, carrying the rifle with bluff uncalled.

The innumerable shackles hanging upon the trees and bushes, the increasing number of slave-gangs on the march, the secret lamentations poured out to my carriers by men and women shackled up at night in the rest-kraals or dépôts showed that we were approaching the final place of sale or embarkation. After passing through a long, dry cañon, where we had to climb like goats from rock to rock, we came to a brimming reach of the Katumbella River. It is a dangerous haunt of hippos and crocodiles, some of which, nearer the mouth, I afterwards saw of such enormous dimensions that even believers in St. George and the Dragon only laugh at my measurements. From the river the path rose again over ridges of desert mountain, where eland, koodoo, and even buffaloes find shelter, coming down at night from the waterless mountains to drink in the river or at the pools near the coast. From the summit of a high pass I had my last view backward towards the interior of the



mysterious continent I was leaving. Then we climbed the steep track over the final range, and at last a great space of varied prospect lay extended below us—the little houses of Katumbella at our feet, the fertile plain beside its river, green with trees and plantations ; on our right the ring of Lobito Bay ; on our left a line of yellow beach leading to the white church and houses of Benguella, fifteen miles away, and beyond them to a desert promontory of grotesque rocks. But there, far in front, like a gulf of dim and misty blue, merging in the sky without a trace of horizon, stretched the ocean.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE COCOA ISLANDS

*"I was not born a little slave  
To labour in the sun,  
And wish that I were in my grave  
And all my labour done."*

English Hymn.

AS I approached the little town of Katumbella, near the mouth of the Katumbella River, a messenger met me half-way up the white track on the hill over which the slave caravans have passed for centuries. He brought an invitation from a Dutch trader to lodge in his private house, which I did for some days while I rested the carriers, watched the slave traffic, and shot at enormous crocodiles (probably in vain) or contemplated the sharks that could be seen in the high and transparent billows off the beach as in the glass cases of an aquarium. He was a "type," that Dutch trader. Talking to me, he strongly disapproved of the slave traffic, but was a notorious slave-trader himself. He boasted that he treated his own slaves with the perfection of benevolence, but if one of them tried to run away he said he flogged him first and then sold him at Benguella for export to San Thomé, his price being £16 per head as a minimum. His wife came from Holland, and was, I think, physically the least attractive woman I have seen. Yet whenever the trader left the house, he locked her up in a secret chamber and took the huge key in his pocket, so scrupulously careful was he of domestic honour. Perhaps self-knowledge inclined him to defend others from temptation. For once, when I had gone down the river with him and two Englishmen to shoot crocodiles, we left him in a Spanish planter's house where dwelt a lady far superior in

appearance to the matrimonial prisoner at home, and on our return he told us a thrilling story of having hunted a koodoo among the thorns. As he obviously had not left the house, we invented the word "koodooing" to express a pursuit in no way connected with that beautiful antelope.

The two Englishmen, having heard of my arrival, had come over from Benguella to warn me of the danger which they had been told awaited me there. One was attached to the Eastern Telegraph Company's station, the other had been in the Ladysmith siege, and so remembered me. They conveyed their warnings in various hints, strongly advising me to make haste and catch a steamer that was due to sail the next day. A Dutchman who had accompanied them was more explicit, and offered me the shelter of his house if I was obliged to remain. Of course I could not leave the coast without investigating the embarkation of the slaves, and so before dawn I set out for my last trek—the fifteen miles through the thorns and sand to Benguella, where I paid off my carriers, with regrets on both sides at parting, and stayed about a fortnight. It was not a pleasant time. I enjoy melodrama, but to be the central figure in a melodrama is different from watching it on the stage. I enjoy reading Bunyan, but I found his rule "to live each day as 'twere my last" almost paralysing. Warnings came to me from every side. The honest Dutchman, Heer Duym, who gave me a room, was apprehensive day and night. The half-dozen British residents and engineers engaged on the new railway were apprehensive too, and gave me secret hints of danger. The Accra "boy" who had accompanied me throughout and spoke a little Coast English and Portuguese was terrified at the talk he heard in the stores along the street. Friendly people told me with peculiar emphasis of a Portuguese planter who had been going home to expose the slave traffic but was found dead in his cabin after his first meal on board. A Portuguese trader who had denounced the same traffic showed me a packet of pounded glass which he had scraped from the bottom of his soup. Portuguese

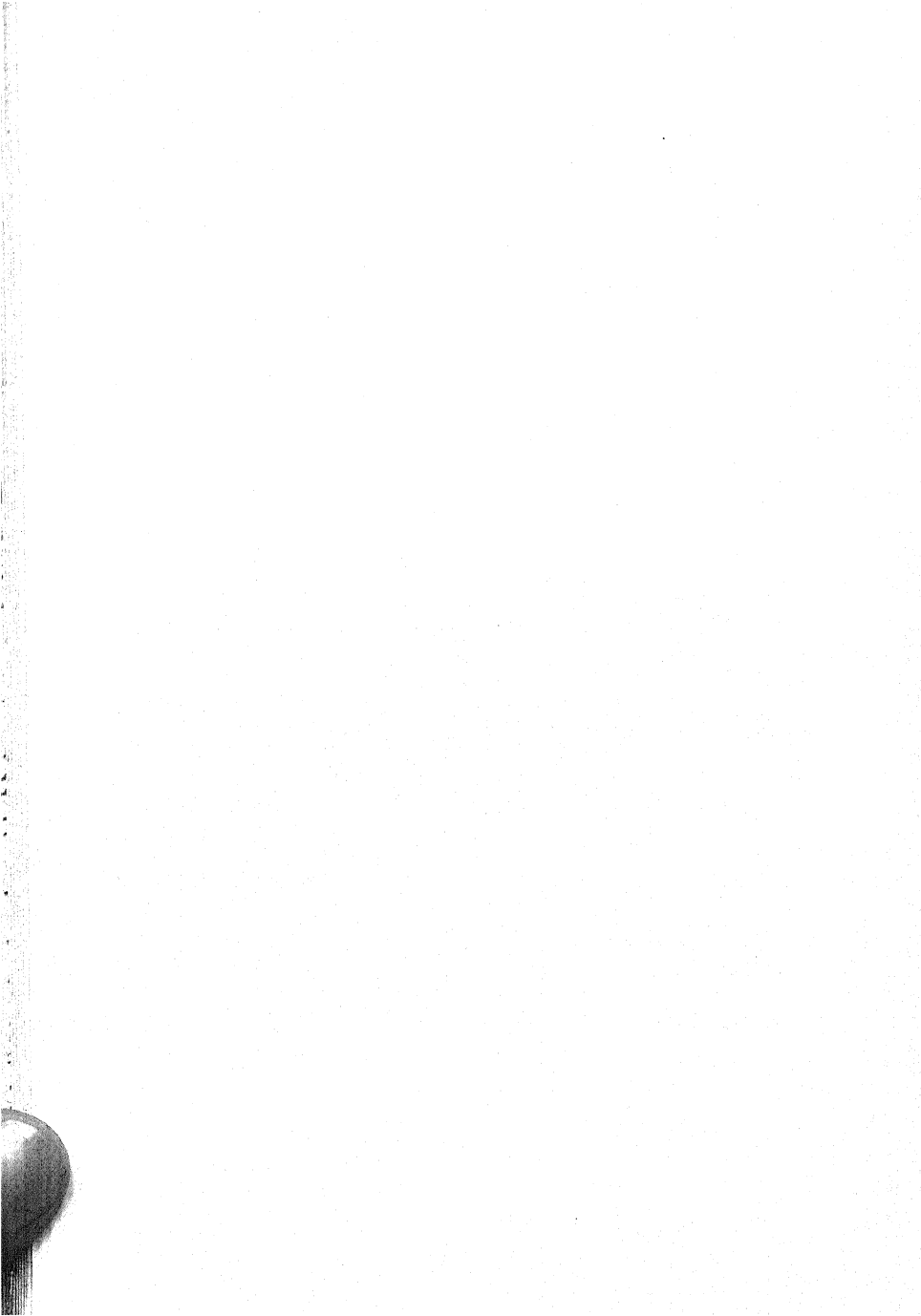
hospitality is everywhere recognised. So that, in spite of the precautions kindly taken by my Ladysmith friend and others, the fortnight passed rather in accordance with Bunyan's rule than my own wishes.

Still, as the Portuguese steamers sailed twice a month, the delay between one sailing and the next enabled me to fulfil my purpose. I watched the slaves being marched down from the interior in gangs, as I had seen them on the route. In Benguella they were herded up in large courtyards behind the traders' or agents' houses. A day or two before the arrival of the next ship, the Curador, an official appointed by the "Central Committee of Labour and Emigration" in Lisbon, entered the so-called Tribunal (a long low building on the main street), and the natives were ranged up before him in parties. In accordance with the "reforms" introduced in 1903 after the panic caused by the Bailundu native rising against slavery, each native was formally asked whether he or she was willing to go to work in San Thomé. In most cases no answer was given, for the unhappy creatures knew well enough they were on the way to what they call the "abyss of hell" (*Okalunga*). If any answer was made, no attention was paid to it. A contract was then drawn out for five years' labour on one of the two islands, and each slave was given a tin cylinder containing a copy of his register, his birthplace, his chief's name, the name of the agent who had supplied him, and a space for "observations," of which I never saw any. He also received a disc with his number, the initials of the agent, and sometimes the name of the island to which he was destined. Dressed like tomfools in brilliant cheap clothes and caps, with the "white man's Ju-ju" of disc and cylinder hung about them, the slaves were then marched back to their courtyards, or direct to the ship. They had been "redeemed" or "ransomed" by the paternal Government, and the pitiless farce was over.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The word "ransomed" was actually used by Mr. Nightingale (afterwards our Consul at Boma) in his Consular Report on the traffic (1902).



LONG SHACKLE HANGING FROM TREE ON  
SLAVE ROUTE



The business side of the transaction was carefully organised. The agents, who were licensed by a local Committee in San Thomé, had to deposit £100 with the Government before they set up in slave-dealing, and for his licence each had to pay two shillings on every slave supplied, and £1 per slave in stamp duty. He had further to pay £2 per head as fare on the steamer, and six shillings per head to the port of landing. Further, the captain of the steamer got four shillings per head, and the doctor on board two shillings for every slave landed alive, and on the average only 4 per cent died on the voyage to the islands, which lasted eight days. Then the Curador would of course expect some reward for his strained conscience, and the commandants in the forts up country expected something for allowing the gangs of slaves to pass through. Cheap as the purchase of slaves in the interior certainly was, the expenses of the long journey and the pay of the gangers with their shackles and whips were considerable, and by the time a slave arrived at Benguela (a great percentage having died on the way) the licensed agent had to give as much as £16 per head for a man or woman. The planters on San Thomé and Principè paid from £26 to £30 for a man or woman safely landed in good condition (afterwards the price went up to £35 and £40); but from this considerable profit of £10 to £14 for the agent per head the above deductions must be made, though even when they have been made the profit was eminently satisfactory, and all were content—all but the slaves, whose feelings counted no more than those of bullocks or cows at a cattle market.

Diverse causes had brought these men and women to their fate. Some had broken native customs or Portuguese laws; some had been charged with witchcraft by the medicine-man because a relation had died; some were wiping out an ancestral debt; some were sold by their maternal uncles, to whom all children belong; some served as indemnity for village wars; some had been raided on the Congo frontier; some were purchased for a gun or a few cartridges; others were but changing masters, for when a slave was too worn-

out for work on the mainland he was shipped to San Thomé, just as we in London ship an old cab-horse to Antwerp for cat's meat. On the 8th of June, 1905, a hundred and fifty of the poor creatures, not counting babies (no young children but babies were taken), bemused with a parting dope of rum, and bedecked like clowns with brilliantly striped jerseys and grotesque caps, passed down the Benguela street, bound for the land of doom from which there was no return.

I did not actually accompany them down the street, having been overcome during the previous night with the common effects of poisoning—violent vomiting, intense cold in the limbs, which turned bluish, and fainting fits about every half-hour. Physicians have told me the poison was probably aconite, but I have no evidence to show whether it was intentionally administered—no evidence beyond the probability and the repeated warnings, which kept reaching me, even from distant Mossamedes. In great distress, my trusty Dutchman summoned my Ladysmith friend, and he carried or supported me down to the ship. Other Englishmen stayed on board with me almost till the ship sailed late at night, and their parting from me was, for Englishmen, singularly touching.

Next morning we anchored off Novo Redondo and took on eighty more slaves. A heavy sea was running, and coming off in lighters, most of the natives were very sick. As the lighters rose and fell against the ship's side, they were hauled on to the gangway like sacks. One woman, seasick and having a baby two or three days old tied to her back, kept missing the rise of the wave, and so was flung violently back again into the lighter. At last the crew managed to set her on the foot of the ladder and encouraged her to mount by striking her sharply behind. Gathering up her dripping blanket over one arm, she began the ascent on all fours, as natives do, until her knees caught in the blanket and she fell flat against the sloping stairs. In that position she wriggled up them like a snake, clutching at each



stair with her arms above her head. At last she reached the top, soaked with water, her blanket gone, her gaudy clothing torn off or hanging in strips, while the baby on her back, still crumpled and pink from the womb, squeaked feebly like a blind kitten. Swinging it round to her breast, she walked modestly and without complaint to her place in the row that awaited the doctor's inspection. In all my life I have never heard anything so hellish as the outbursts of laughter with which the ladies and gentlemen of the first-class watched that slave-woman's struggle up to the deck. It was one of those things that make me doubt whether mankind has been worth the travail of our evolution.

After we had stopped at Loanda and taken on forty-two more slaves (making our full complement 272 men and women, not counting the numerous babies) we called at Ambriz, and there a singular abomination occurred. For in the early morning one of the slaves, seeing the district of which he was a native not far away, slid off the fo'c'sle, where the slaves were crowded together, and tried to swim for freedom. The sea was full of sharks, and I could only hope they would devour him ; for a boat was dropped at once from the ship, and in ten minutes it had overtaken the swimmer. Leaning over the side, the two black men and the white officer battered his head with their oars and sticks till he was quiet, and then dragged him into the boat, laying a piece of sailcloth over his nakedness that the feelings of the ladies on board might not be shocked. Dripping and trembling, he was taken below by the doctor and the Government agent, who accompanied every consignment of slaves, and there he was chained fast to a post. "*Boa chicote !*" shouted the first-class passengers ; "Flog him ! Flog him !" And no doubt he was flogged without mercy ; but if so, the torture was performed in private—an unnecessary waste of pleasure, for the ladies and gentlemen would have thoroughly enjoyed the sight and sound. Not, I suppose, that they were worse than most people of their class. One must remember that this was a case of property

and that the cultivation of cocoa, for which the slave was destined, is a very lucrative business. Civilised people may whine and blubber over imaginary sufferings in plays and novels, but touch their comfort, touch their property—they are rattlesnakes then ! The Steamship Company that transported the slaves, and on that journey took off 16,000 bags of cocoa at four shillings a bag, was paying 22 per cent ; and the two islands of San Thomé and Principè were supplying one-fifth of the cocoa then consumed by the whole world. In face of such reassuring figures what did one man's torture matter ? Or what the enslavement of about 4000 to 4500 men and women every year ? For that was then the average number imported annually from the mainland. Afterwards it increased to about 6000.

As we approached the larger island, the slaves on deck regarded the scene with listless apathy, and perhaps their situation rendered them incapable of appreciating the beauties of Nature. At times of deep depression or anxiety I have often observed the same incapacity in myself. Yet San Thomé is a place of singular loveliness. It stands just north of the equator, which passes through the rocks of its southern extremity, and Principè, which is about one-tenth of its size, lies some eighty miles north-east. Both islands are volcanic, and the mountains of San Thomé rise to something over 6000 feet, those on Principè being less lofty but far more precipitous. A warm and drizzling mist hangs over the valleys almost continuously, and as we approached the larger island, it steamed like a gigantic hot-house, as in fact it is. Even the mountains, almost to their summits, are covered with the luxuriance of tropical growths, and every leaf drips with warmish dew or rain. Such soil and such climate compose the very paradise of cocoa, which is called the food of the gods. Not a paradise of mankind, for both islands are deadly with every form of tropical fever, and Principè was then afflicted with sleeping-sickness besides. The segregated victims wandered about upon a little beach there—wandered or lay torpid till death

came to end them. The death-rate among the slaves on both islands was enormous, running to as many as 20 per cent on Príncipe (ten times higher than the highest death-rate in any English city, and at that time Liverpool had the highest). The death-rate on San Thomé was about 10 per cent annually, but the exact figures for the whole island were not then published. A doctor on the best of the plantations—a show-place for visitors—told me the death-rate on that *roça* (plantation) was 12 or 14 per cent per annum among the slaves (he called them *serviçaes*). When I asked what was the chief cause, he replied, "Anæmia." "And what brings on the anæmia?" I asked, and he said, "Tristeza." More deadly even than the climate with its fevers was "tristeza"—melancholy, hopelessness, the homesickness which all Africans suffer when taken from their villages.

On landing at San Thomé I went by invitation to the Eastern Telegraph Station, and was received with great kindness by Mr. Ceffala, the head official, and by the rest of the small staff. They willingly gave me all information they could, but did not know very much, being isolated by the conditions of their work, and also suffering severely from fever at the time. Even more important in the end was my meeting at the Station with Joseph Burt, a man of very remarkable personality, who had just arrived from England, having been sent out by the Cadburys and other cocoa firms (including the German Stollwerck) to examine the very question upon which I was engaged. After our first meeting, I described him in my diary as "about the youngest man of forty-three who could live." There was all the attraction of youth about his appearance and manner—so handsome he was, clean, and secure in the health of Quaker temperance. His mind was youthful too, being full of theories upon life—theories often contradictory but always fine. He had known Edward Carpenter, and Captain St. John of the Penal Reform League, and had for a time lived with a Communist Settlement in Gloucestershire, as I had lived

with a similar Settlement in Northumberland. But at the moment, and perhaps for some months longer, he stood in strong reaction against all theories represented by such movements. He appeared to despise "the working man," and was inclined to reverence the "working capitalist." Perhaps this peculiar judgment was based upon his acquaintance with the Cadburys and other wealthy Quakers. More likely it sprang from a Quaker's endeavour to think well of all men, especially of the despised and rejected, as capitalists usually are. I think it must have been owing to the same desire to find good in everyone that he at that time defended the system of slavery as we saw it around us. "The Portuguese," he said to me, "are certainly doing a marvellous work for Angola and these islands. Call it slavery if you like. Names and systems don't matter. The sum of human happiness is being infinitely increased. And, after all, are we not all slaves?"

Such words might have led me to suppose that he was trying to defend the interests of the cocoa firms who purchased a large proportion of their raw material from these islands, and had sent him out to investigate, naturally hoping that he would report well of the labour system which enriched the plantations. But such an idea did not even occur to my mind. The man was obviously honest above suspicion. Truth radiated from him. I described him as "the most innocent of mankind," but the touch of sarcasm was undeserved. He was merely imbued with that admirable Quaker quality which has often maddened my impatient and unregenerate soul. It is a capacity to obey the precept, "Resist not evil, but overcome evil with good." It is the character which, upon encountering evil, instead of violently striking at it as we heathens are inclined to do, surveys it calmly, engages in silent prayer, and walks around to discover some way of taking it in the rear by persuasion or appeal to a sense of virtue always latent in the heart of evil men. To indignation the process is irritating in its quietude, its deliberation, and perhaps in its success. But I

acknowledge that the success is almost invariable, and Joseph Burtt's subsequent service to the cause that I had most at heart was only one more example of it. He stayed nearly six months on the islands, journeyed up and down Angola for about six months longer, sailed round to Delagoa, visited the chief towns of South Africa, and was away from England nearly two years, engaged upon this investigation. After his return he published a valuable Report, by which my own published conclusions were confirmed in almost every detail. And what was of at least equal importance for myself in the future controversy, he sent back to the British cocoa firms a code word signifying "Nevinson's report, far from being exaggerated, is an underestimate of the truth." I had, however, no knowledge of that confirmation till the libel action brought by the Cadburys against the *Standard* in 1909.<sup>1</sup>

Accompanied by this remarkable man or by some member of the Cable Station staff, I visited many of the *roças* or plantations, which on San Thomé numbered about 230. I went alone by steamer to the island of Príncipe and visited some of the fifty plantations there, being entertained by an exuberant negro from Sierra Leone, who regarded himself as the representative of the British Empire, and had a plantation of his own, cultivated by numerous slaves. On that wild and precipitous island I also found a British planter who gave me much information. In brief terms, the prevailing system on the islands was this: after the slaves had been landed on the pier at San Thomé, they were

<sup>1</sup> See "Report on the Conditions of Coloured Labour on the Cocoa Plantations of S. Thomé and Príncipe, and the Methods of Procuring it in Angola," by Joseph Burtt and Dr. W. Claude Horton (who accompanied Burtt on his journey inland). Privately published in 1907.

From this Report I may quote the conclusions, written by Joseph Burtt: "Now that I have to state my conclusions, I must use the words which most nearly portray actual facts. I am satisfied that under the servical system, as it exists at present, thousands of black men and women are, against their will, and often under circumstances of great cruelty, taken away every year from their homes and transported across the sea to work on unhealthy islands, from which they never return. If this is not slavery, I know of no word in the English language which correctly characterises it."

conducted, as I saw, to the Curador's office and apportioned to the various planters according to the discs given them at the port of embarkation. They were then made up into gangs and marched off to their plantation, the march taking not more than one or two days, for the San Thomé island is only about thirty-five miles by fifteen (and Principè, as I said, only one-tenth of that size). After two or three days' rest, they were then set to work clearing the forests for further plantations, clearing the ground of weeds under the cocoa trees, gathering the great yellow pods which grow miraculously out of the main stem, sorting the brown kernels, heaping them up to ferment, raking them out in vast pans to dry, labouring in the carpenters' sheds, or superintending the new machines. So the toil went on, day after day, till death ended it, and the slave's body, wrapped in a cloth and tied to a pole, as I saw, was carried out by two other slaves and deposited somewhere in the forests. The doctors told me that if they could keep a slave alive through the melancholy and home-sickness of the first year or two, he or she sometimes lived for some years longer. According to law the labour contract lasted only five years. The planter from time to time collected some fifty of his slaves who had been with him for five years, sent for the Curador, and paraded the fifty in front of him. In the presence of two witnesses and his secretary, the Curador then announced that their contract was renewed for five years more, and the slaves were dismissed to their labours. A planter told me that some of his slaves counted the years for the first five, but never after.

On most of the plantations the buildings were arranged in large quadrangles, the planter's house being on one side, together with the homes of the overseers or gangers, and the quarters of such slaves as were employed as concubines or for other domestic purposes. On the other sides stood the sheds of the ordinary labourers upon the plantation, arranged like the dormitories in barracks, and sometimes divided by partitions, like the stalls in a stable. A large

barn was used as kitchen, each family making its own little fire on the ground, and cooking its rations separately—the unconquerable habit of all natives, as of our suburban populations. Outside the quadrangle, in most plantations, stood a hospital. Wages were paid in cash, and by the reformed Decrees of 1903, a man was to receive about ten shillings a month and a woman about six. But the planters told me that, as a matter of fact, the average wage was only about 1s. 2d. a week, though one or two slaves were pointed out as receiving up to fifteen shillings a month. And the planters always added that, as the money could be spent only upon the store which they provided on the plantation, most of it came back to them as profit. According to the Decrees, three-fifths of the wages were always to be held over as a “Repatriation Fund.” I was told that as the planters never sent the slaves home, they did not deduct the money for doing it. Such self-denial seemed to support the Quakers’ contention that some filament of virtue lies concealed in every human heart. But it was afterwards discovered that a large Repatriation Fund (about £100,000) had actually been collected, though about half of it had disappeared.

The demand for slaves was so great that their price ran high, and one of the managers told me he could not fully develop his land without 200 more, but he simply could not afford the £6000 needed for their purchase. After I left the islands, I heard the price had gone up to an average of £40 a head. It was very important to keep alive the beings in whom so much capital had been invested, and such ill-treatment as might lead to death was deprecated. Flogging with the *palmatoria* (a thin wooden slat with a hole in the oval end for beating the palm) and with the *chicote* (a rod of hide or rubber) was universally practised as discipline, but the most terrible punishment even by these means were reserved for runaway slaves. The essence of slavery has nothing to do with treatment, good or bad, but it appeared to me that violent ill-treatment or deadly torture was rare. Naturally,

the pretty young concubines were the best off, and it was one of their privileges to dole out the treats to the other slaves on Sundays. For in hopes of encouraging the Christian faith upon which eternal salvation is thought to depend, Sundays were celebrated with a special rite. In the afternoon, the slaves, bringing bundles of fodder which they had gathered for the horses and cattle, were ranged up in the usual quadrangle and passed in order before two of the planter's concubines, one giving out wine from a large pitcher, the other leaves of tobacco. Each child was given a sup of wine ; each grown slave had the choice of a sup of wine and one leaf of tobacco, or two leaves without wine. I noticed that most men chose the two leaves, most women one leaf and the sup of wine. In the centre of the square stood the gangers armed with long staves or whips, and beside them lay the large mastiffs which prowled around the buildings at night, and have been said by defenders of the system to be pets, like lap-dogs, though they had not that appearance. The rite was performed in absolute silence, perhaps due to the sanctity of the day, for all had put on their Sunday best, and to each was given a ration of dried fish for the Sunday banquet.

Attempts to escape were numerous. Sometimes the slaves tried to run home through the forests, not understanding what an island is. More often they dug out a canoe in some secret bay such as abounds on Principè, loaded it with provisions and tried to paddle to the mainland. One such party of fugitives, numbering eighteen, escaped to Fernando Po five months before I arrived, but the Spanish authorities on that island, with legal brutality, sent them all back to Principè, where they were flogged almost to death and returned to their lawful owners. The exuberant negro planter whom I mentioned told me that in the April before my arrival he had caught eight of his own slaves loading up a canoe so crammed with provisions that it would not have floated. He took them all to the gaol and had them flogged to the point of death, and then set them to their customary



work again, thus successfully thwarting their brief hope of freedom and their flagitious infringements of the rights of property. But scattered among the inaccessible precipices and deep forests of Principè, a large number of runaway slaves were living in savage liberty. Some planters told me there were 200 of them, some said about 1000. Probably they numbered 700 or 800 men and women, maintaining themselves on patches of mealies and plantains, civet cats and other small animals which they shot with cleverly made bows and arrows. They also made cunning saws out of the *machets* or large knives which they took with them from the plantations. After the rags that they were wearing on their escape had rotted away, they lived in complete nakedness, except that some of the women stitched plantain leaves together as aprons. Perhaps owing to the extreme hardship of such a life, it was said few children were born to them; or perhaps they purposely practised "birth-control" because they lived continually on the move, and were subject to hunting expeditions organised by groups of planters. A clause in the Decrees of 1903 ordained these man-hunts whenever more than ten slaves had escaped into the forests, and, as the planters told me, the hunting-parties formed cordons and swept suspected coverts, capturing or shooting any human quarry they might beat out. I gathered that these jolly hunts often degenerated into convivial gatherings at which drink was the real object and murder only the excuse. But one planter described to me, with all a sportsman's relish, how his party had espied runaways clinging like bats under the branches of high trees, and had brought them crashing down, as one might bring down a sitting pheasant. Defenders of the slave system have denied the possibility of such massacre, and of course the planter may have been lying, as sportsmen sometimes will. But he had no reason to pass off that kind of lie upon me; rather the reverse.

Such hunting stories, whether true or not, do not affect the main question. Slavery implies the purchase of human

beings, and the compulsion to labour without consent. No planter could deny, or ever attempted to deny in my presence, that both those conditions were involved in the system of "Contract Labour" invariably practised upon the Cocoa Islands. It is impossible that anyone who had ever been on the islands or in Angola could deny it, and I can but repeat the final words of Joseph Burt: "If this system is not slavery, I know of no word in the English language which correctly characterises it."

Our departure from San Thomé was delayed by the death of a port master, apparently due to simple terror of being poisoned. And in a cabin near mine lay a poor young Belgian who had come down from the Congo border with the usual accounts of the slave traffic, and kept telling me he was sure he had been poisoned on the ship. Gradually he became crazy or delirious, and was carried ashore in a dying condition. A raging headwind made progress tedious, but at last we reached Lisbon, then Vigo, then Liverpool, and such a welcome in London as was my greatest reward but one.

The greatest of all rewards was not to come till many years later. At the end of July, 1905, when I returned, I was already well on in middle age, and I ought by that time to have known mankind better than I did. But I actually supposed that my revelation of this slave traffic would have an immediate effect. I had imagined that the British detestation of slavery would be aroused; that our Government would make representations to Portugal on the subject; that our Quaker cocoa firms would at once boycott the raw material derived from such an abominable source; and that there would be a general stir among honourable and influential newspapers. Nothing of the kind happened. A few of my personal friends gave up cocoa; Fox Bourne, the enthusiastic Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, believed my report, and did his utmost to make it known; Roger Casement, whom I then met for the first time, in the beautiful relic of the Savoy

Convent beside the River Colne at Denham, confirmed my report in every particular from his own personal knowledge of Angola, but he was not then able to make his confirmation public. "Harper's" did not issue my account in book-form till the following year, and in the meantime I was away in Russia; the Anti-Slavery Society, so immensely helpful afterwards, was slow in taking the question up; the Congo Reform Association, represented by E. D. Morel, afterwards to be so true a friend, seemed to fear that Angola might divert attention from the Congo. On almost every side, I was faced, not so much by opposition as by indifference. And of course the Portuguese had their say. In England, in Switzerland, and in the United States, they had strong supporters of their policy and their trade. When my report began to be known, they attacked me with the virulence natural to people who feared the ruin of their most lucrative national investment. Their papers began by asserting I had never been in Angola or on the islands. They wrote of me as "the myth Nevinson." When they found that I really existed and that my journey could not be denied, their fury increased. They poured upon me every kind of calumny. One, with old-fashioned politeness, wrote that he was coming to England to challenge me to a duel. I replied that I would meet him at any time and at any port he chose to name, and that my weapon was a machine-gun.<sup>1</sup>

Less dramatic but equally virulent were the personal attacks upon me by a retired British officer, who, in his zeal for the Portuguese plantation owners and their labour system, poured out rabid abuse on me in various English and Portuguese papers, "the agent of anarchists" and "ally of assassins" being among his milder reproaches. I contented myself with answering him in the papers published in England, and answer was not difficult, for he called San Thomé a "veritable paradise for the blacks," and compared

<sup>1</sup> I suppose I remembered Bluntschli's similar answer in "Arms and the Man": "I'm in the artillery; and I have the choice of weapons. If I go, I shall take a machine gun."

a native removed from his African home and established in the comfort of the islands to a monkey taken from its natural haunts and housed safely in the Zoo! It did not occur to him that one could hardly find a more accurate description of slavery imposed upon a human being.

Partly owing to my long absence in Russia and India during the intervening years, the height of the controversy was not reached till 1908 or 1909. Directly after my return from the islands I urged upon our cocoa firms the necessity of boycotting slave-grown cocoa both for the sake of the slaves and for their own reputation as Quakers and hereditary opponents of the slave trade. I was met by that peculiar hesitation which often characterises Quakers when action is called for. Perhaps a boycott seemed to them too violent as being a resistance of evil. Perhaps they hoped to convert the plantation owners to the Christianity of Friends by some persuasive argument of mutual advantage. Perhaps, as in fact they pleaded, they relied on Sir Edward Grey's official advice to keep quiet lest a boycott should impede diplomacy's artful aid. At all events, year after year, they put action off. Though Joseph Burt was their own man, they long held back his report. When they heard I was about to publish an article upon the slavery in the *Fortnightly*, they sent Richard Cross, the solicitor for one of the cocoa firms, to dissuade me. Richard Cross, though a man of the highest character and honourable nature, did try dissuasion on me but failed, and the article appeared in September, 1907. Through A. G. Gardiner, then editor of the *Daily News*, controlled by the head of the Cadbury firm, they tried to prevent Brailsford, the chief leader-writer, from writing on the subject. But again they failed. Brailsford threatened resignation, and his leading article appeared in May, 1908. In the same year Fox Bourne published his pamphlet, "Slave Traffic in Portuguese Africa," and I narrated the facts of the slavery at various meetings, the chief being one held in the Caxton Hall with St. Loe Strachey in the chair, and Dr. Robert Horton, Leonard Hobhouse,

E. D. Morel, Anthony Hope Hawkins, and Miss Candlish of the Angola Evangelical Mission as principal speakers (December 4th, 1908). The letter to the *Times* giving notice of the meeting was signed by Canon Barnett, Galsworthy, Ramsay MacDonald, Gilbert Murray, C. P. Scott (the famous editor of the *Manchester Guardian*), and H. G. Wells, which I considered a powerful backing. Indeed, I can never fully express my gratitude to those and other distinguished men who supported me throughout that long and thankless struggle. But especially I am grateful to St. Loe Strachey, the owner and editor of the *Spectator*, who not only allowed me the free use of his paper but himself wrote leading articles on the subject ("abomination" as he rightly called it), and that though, as he said, he agreed with me upon no earthly subject from India to Woman Suffrage, except upon slavery alone.

But, indeed, by that time the cause had enough of what Americans call "publicity." My colleague in the South African war and in Macedonia, H. A. Gwynne, then editor of the *Standard*, had got hold of my book, "A Modern Slavery," and having heard that William Cadbury was just proceeding to Angola in person to make inquiries, he wrote a leading article upon the subject in his paper (September, 28, 1908). It was a fine specimen of satiric invective. It began by congratulating Mr. Cadbury upon his journey, "which does not come too soon." An ironic description of Bournville and its joys followed.

"In his model village and factories of Bournville the welfare of the workpeople is studied as closely as the quality of the goods manufactured. There are lecture-rooms and gymnasia, and no public-houses; the young ladies in the firm's employ visit the swimming bath weekly, and they have prayers every morning before beginning their honourable task of supplying the British public with wholesome food. But in this latter useful process they are not the only agents. The white hands of the Bournville chocolate makers are helped by other unseen hands some thousands of miles away, black and brown hands, toiling in

plantations, or hauling loads through swamp and forest. In the plenitude of his solicitude for his fellow-creatures Mr. Cadbury might have been expected to take some interest in the owners of those same grimed African hands, whose toil also is so essential to the beneficent and lucrative operations of Bournville."

After speaking of the opposition raised by the *Daily News* (of which George Cadbury was then the chief proprietor) to Chinese labour in the South African mines, the leading article repeated "our respectful surprise that Mr. Cadbury's voyage of discovery had been deferred so long":

"One might have supposed that Messrs. Cadbury would themselves have long ago ascertained the condition and circumstances of those labourers on the West Coast of Africa, and the islands adjacent, who provide them with raw material. That precaution does not seem to have been taken. It was left to others to throw light on those favoured portions of the earth's surface which enjoy the rule of Portugal in Africa."

The writer, after a flattering eulogy upon myself for my "powers of observation, honesty," and the rest, gave a brief summary of my book, and concluded with the words:

"Such is the terrible indictment, made, as we have said, by a writer of high character and reputation on the evidence of his own eyesight. There is only one thing more amazing than his statements, and that is the strange tranquillity with which they were received by those virtuous people in England whom they intimately concerned."

Obviously, the gravamen of that charge against the cocoa firms was their prolonged delay in taking definite action. Off and on for three years Fox Bourne, I myself, and others had been urging the necessity of boycotting the slave-grown cocoa, but had always been met by one plea or another for delay. It was not true that the firms had remained indifferent and done nothing. They had begun anxious inquiries seven years before; they had sent out Joseph Burt; they had asked Mr. Ceffala on San Thomé to watch

the traffic for them ; they had appealed to Sir Edward Grey for advice ; William Cadbury had been two or three times to Lisbon to protest ; he was now on the point of setting out for Angola and the islands in person, and on his return the firms did at last declare the boycott I had always urged (March 17, St. Patrick's Day, 1909). In the *Daily News* of that date I wrote a special article to express my joy and congratulations. But the fine action of the firms had been deferred too long for their reputation, and the outside public could not possibly conjecture all that had really been done by them or the reasons of their hesitation. The Cadbury firm now saw themselves bound to institute a libel action against the *Standard*, sure to attract far greater attention than if they had simply announced the boycott even one year sooner.

So the famous civil action known as "Messrs. Cadbury Brothers v. the *Standard* Newspaper Company" came up for hearing before Mr. Justice Pickford and a jury on November 29, 1909, and it lasted seven days. By the desire of the Cadbury firm it was held in Birmingham, and perhaps that local firm did not realise that uncommon goodness does not necessarily ensure popularity among more worldly neighbours. The counsel for the plaintiffs were Mr. Rufus Isaacs (Lord Reading) and Mr. John Simon (Sir John Simon). For the defendants were Sir Edward Carson (Lord Carson) and Mr. Eldon Bankes. Before one of the greatest judges, the most powerful of King's Counsellors contended—Rufus Isaacs and John Simon, both so smooth, courteous, affable, imperturbable, and cool as ice ; Edward Carson, passionate, satiric, ironic, sinister, and in cross-examination pitiless. I was summoned as chief witness for the defence, but Sir Edward Carson never called on me. For, to my surprise, Mr. Rufus Isaacs announced almost at the beginning of the trial that the plaintiffs accepted my report in "A Modern Slavery" as true beyond dispute ; but they could hardly do otherwise after Joseph Burt had sent them the cabled code-word above referred to. From

day to day I sat just in front of Sir Edward Carson, ready to answer questions on points of fact, but not desiring to take further part except on one occasion when William Cadbury, who was the chief witness for the plaintiffs, on the fourth day of the trial, said he did not believe what I had heard about parties arranged among the planters for hunting down escaped slaves. After ample compliments as to my "bravery," "straightforwardness," and "absolute truth in recording all that I had myself seen," he suggested that by the time I heard the reports about the hunting I was so racked with fever and nervous apprehensions as to be incapable of judging hearsay evidence. I was not able to reply in Court, but now, after all these years, I take this opportunity of repeating that the hunting down of escaped slaves was expressly provided for in the Portuguese Regulations themselves, and that I was just as sane as usual when the planters, both Portuguese and English-speaking, told me the story of those barbarous expeditions. This could be proved by my diaries, written from day to day with my accustomed calmness, and giving quite definite details.

Another point in the trial that interested me especially, though it was less personal to myself, was old Mr. George Cadbury's statement in the witness-box that, though he had welcomed the boycott for the sake of the Firm's conscience, he did not agree with me that the boycott would help the slaves, and he disapproved of my article in the *Daily News* maintaining that the boycott was "a step to freedom." As a curious instance of mental habit, I was also interested by the following dialogue between Sir Edward Carson and that veteran head of the Cadbury firm :

" ' You would not object to the *Standard* approaching the consideration of your conduct from the standpoint that you had always been a man greatly interested in the suppression of slavery ? '— ' Always.'

" ' And as a person who looked upon slavery as an accursed thing ? '— ' Always.'

" ' And that anybody who encouraged it directly or



indirectly was doing an immoral thing ? ’—‘ Yes ; the steps I took were to try to put an end to it.’

“ ‘ And anybody who made a profit out of anything produced by slave labour was doing a wrong thing ? ’—‘ One has to use common sense, as well as sentiment. From the point of view of sentiment I should have given up buying at once.’

“ ‘ It was common sense against sentiment ? I ask you again whether you would not say that anybody who made a profit out of the product of slave labour was doing a wrong thing ? ’—‘ I can say that nearly the whole of the profits since that time have gone to benevolent purposes.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

I well remember the painful sense of derision with which I and others heard the worthy old man make that wretched and irrelevant excuse. Sir Edward Carson paused for a moment, and I think a touch of pity for his victim passed through a mind not given to pity.

On the sixth day Sir Edward Carson spoke for the defence. The occasion well suited his powers of sarcastic eloquence, and the whole speech was a model of his style. I will quote only two passages, and those short.

“ If the real state of the facts had become public—and especially if the *Daily News* had taken it up in the way they took up Chinese labour in South Africa—it would have been a funny position. Could Cadbury’s have gone on getting San Thomé cocoa ? Just fancy the *Daily News* readers every morning taking up their papers with an announcement of this kind : ‘ Bournville and San Thomé slavery ! Where does the raw material come from ? ’ What a contrast between the paradise as it is advertised by Messrs Cadbury at Bournville, with all those elegant arrangements for young ladies and young men ! What an extraordinary *Daily News* it would have been ! ”

And, as a final quotation : Sir Edward Carson, referring to the Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society, said he did not know anything more audacious in

<sup>1</sup> This and other quotations come from the verbatim reports published daily in the *Standard* at the time.

the whole case than the efforts to show that these societies concurred with Messrs. Cadbury in their actions :

“It was quite true that they had influence enough with the societies, and that they were able to persuade them not to do anything—more’s the pity—for a certain time. There was, however, one man they had no influence with, and that was Mr. Fox Bourne, the paid secretary (of the Aborigines Protection Society). He stood his ground like a man, and was all along in favour of the policy of giving up dealing.”

I quote that last passage, partly in justice to the friend who was the first and the strongest to support me in that long controversy ; but partly also to confute certain advocates of the slavery who for some years after Fox Bourne’s death in 1909 continued to assert that he had not agreed with me in my unremitting demand for a boycott.

In his summing-up it seemed to me that Mr. Justice Pickford inclined rather to the side of the Cadbury plaintiffs. After reviewing the whole case, he narrowed the question down to the following point.

“What they (the jury) had to say in fact was—was this a dishonest plot to delay the matter being brought before the British public in order to enable the plaintiffs to go on buying slave-grown cocoa which they knew they ought to give up ? That was the matter for the defendants to prove, and that alone was the issue that they had to try.”

The jury retired for nearly an hour, and gave a verdict for the plaintiffs, with damages one farthing. Both Counsel appealed for costs, Sir Edward Carson claiming that the comparatively trifling amount granted as damages implied that, in the opinion of the jury, the action ought never to have been brought. But the Judge gave costs for the plaintiffs, and one naturally supposes they were glad to receive them as an addition to their damages.

I regarded that trial as establishing the facts of the slave traffic and the system of forced labour in Angola and the Islands as I had reported them. For if contradiction had

been possible, two such advocates as Mr. Rufus Isaacs and Mr. John Simon would not have accepted my book on "A Modern Slavery" as true, or as understating the truth. But though my accuracy was not again questioned in this country, and even the Foreign Office had been induced to join in the protests of the Anti-Slavery Society, and to follow up protests with action, compelling the repatriation of many slaves (after 1908), the efforts to suppress the actual slavery had to be continued for many years.<sup>1</sup> Many came to my assistance: Canon Scott Holland of St. Paul's and Oxford, Mr. Scott Lidgett, Lord Cromer, Lord Mayo (who had visited the islands more than forty years ago), Archbishop Davidson, Mr. Oldendorff, a cocoa dealer of Mark Lane, René Claparède of Geneva, and, finally, Sir Edward Grey, not to mention St. Loe Strachey again and Joseph Burt, whose efforts were unremitting and so continued.

Just before the Great War victory seemed assured. On May 2nd, 1914, I wrote in the *Nation* what I hoped to be a song of triumph, beginning: "The publication of a White Book last week on 'Contract Labour in Portuguese West Africa' marks a stage—almost the final stage—in a long and bitter controversy. At last all that some of us said about the slavery in Angola and the two Cocoa Islands of San Thomé and Príncipe is confirmed officially. No one can question the truth or go back upon it now."

That White Book was mainly written by Mr. Robert Smallbones, whom Sir Edward Grey had sent out as Vice-

<sup>1</sup> I say "even the Foreign Office," because when first I was introduced to a leading official there, he accosted me savagely with the words, "Are you the author of these very unpleasant articles on Portuguese Slavery? Did you write that purple report?" I replied that I was glad he found the articles unpleasant, but the report was hardly purple enough. Assuming the official sneer, he then asked, "Do you want us to reduce these wealthy islands to a wilderness, on your bare word?" I replied that a wilderness would be better than the abominations I had seen. With rising indignation, he demanded, "Would you have England police the world wherever you may find slavery?" Imitating the official manner, I replied that the answer was in the affirmative, and the interview soon ended in courteous animosity.

Consul to the Islands, and whom he especially commended for his work there. After a prolonged visit to the plantations he wrote that on some of them he found evidences of flogging and other cruelty, but the chief point was that, whether well treated or badly, the one thought of nearly all the labourers was to be sent home. Hardly any accepted a new contract except under intimidation. All were filled with the African's passion for home. One paralysed woman demanded to be sent. Another, whose legs had been amputated beneath the knee, "insisted on hobbling on her hideous stumps to her native country"; and a man who had also lost both legs "cheerfully faced the perils of the journey clinging to the back of a sturdy friend." Their one longing was to go. "At least we can die at home," they said. "Many rushed off to the port at once, believing the ship was waiting for them, and some were dragged back under armed guards to the scene of their long slavery." Further on in his report, the Vice-Consul wrote :

"From what I have been able to gather, all the *serviçaes* I have now seen were bought in the province of Angola; their original contract was a sham, and the renewed contracts were a farce. I have made this statement many a time to those who should be the first to repudiate it—the representatives of the planters who benefited by this system and those of the Government who had tolerated it—and I regret to say that its correctness was never denied. The expired contracts I have seen were all deliberate untruths, as far as they stated that the *serviçal* had appeared before the Curador and had freely declared his intention to enter an engagement with his employer. Nothing of the kind happened. The *serviçal* never even heard that he was supposed to have made a new contract."

Something had been already accomplished, and much of that was due to Sir Edward Grey's pressure. In an article in the *Spectator* (September, 1915) Lord Cromer stated that about five thousand slaves had been repatriated up to the outbreak of the war. But for that outbreak and the supposed necessity of ingratiating ourselves with "our old

ally " of Portugal, the whole abomination might have been eradicated. During the war and since the peace, news has been contradictory. Forced labour and the purchase of slaves from the mainland for service on the plantations apparently continues, and the death rate, especially on Príncipe, is terribly high. But the contracts are said to be limited to two years, and repatriation is frequent, if not general. Many labourers are also imported from Mozambique, and hitherto these have successfully insisted on returning home at the end of their contract, though lately we heard of supposed difficulty in finding ships for them (spring, 1924). At the worst we may believe that not only have the official Regulations been greatly improved, but that in some respects they are actually observed, which is a very different matter. The contest is not over; the cause is not won; and perpetual vigilance is still required to vindicate freedom against the perpetual encroachments of a lucrative and callous exploitation. But when I left the islands in 1905 not a single slave had ever been released; not one man or woman had ever returned to the mainland. On the lowest calculation we may now assume that at least 10,000 have returned since the repatriation began in 1908, and when I come to die, my deep regret at leaving this beautiful world may perhaps be tempered by a vision of 10,000 little black men and women dancing around my bed to the sound of elfin *ochisangis* or echoing *ochingufus*, and crying in grateful ecstasy: "He sent us home! He sent us home!"

*Note.*—As I regard my attempt to free from slavery the natives of Angola and the Cocoa Islands as the main enterprise of my life, I may add a few further details:

(1) On June 22nd, 1909, Mr. Charles Swan, who had been a missionary for twenty-three years in Angola, wrote to the *Times* saying that he had recently returned to that country from Lisbon, had found the terrible conditions of slavery still existing, and had obtained the signatures of many other missionaries there in support of my report and others.

(2) In the autumn of 1909 Joseph Burt was sent to the

United States by the Anti-Slavery Society in hopes of inducing the American cocoa firms to join in the boycott of San Thomé cocoa. He was received by President Taft with fair promises, but nothing was done.

(3) In 1910 Mr. William Cadbury, who had visited the islands with Joseph Burt in the previous year, published a report called "Labour in Portuguese West Africa," containing the new Code of Regulations issued by the Portuguese Government.

(4) In February, 1910, the Portuguese issued a large book in defence of their system, combining descriptions of the advantages bestowed on the slaves with much abuse of the Anti-Slavery Society, our cocoa firms, and myself.

(5) In 1911 John H. Harris, of the Anti-Slavery Society, after revisiting the Congo, where he had long served as a missionary, landed on San Thomé for the first time, and in the May number of the *Contemporary*, 1912, published a report of the terrible conditions he found still existing there.

(6) In 1912 a report was issued by Senhor Jeronimo Paiva de Carvalho, who had been Curador on Príncipe up to 1907, saying that the Repatriation Fund had always been collected, but was retained by the State; that the slaves often killed themselves in the hope of returning to their native villages as spirits; and that the runaways who were caught by the organised hunting parties were slowly killed.

(7) In 1917 a White Book was issued, chiefly written by Consul-General Hall Hall and Vice-Consul H. H. Cassells, reporting their visits to certain plantations on San Thomé, and expressing belief in improvements. Mr. Cassells, however, noticed that, though hundreds of natives were needed to repair the railway at Katumbella, all ran away from the train, fearing it would take them to San Thomé. He added, "This fear of going to San Thomé, for which the Portuguese are entirely responsible, should become gradually less and eventually disappear if, and only if, repatriation is carried out loyally and the bonus system is maintained."

(8) On February 17th, 1923, the paper, *A Liberdade*, published in Lisbon, but circulated in San Thomé, issued "An appeal from the people of San Thomé against the tyranny of the Curador for forcing the *serviçaes* to re-contract only with their former masters, however detested." The article begins: "Are we still under slavery? The following facts bring shame on the nation, and prove that the spirit of the slaver still lives in the officials sent us from Lisbon. We live under a tyranny of incompetence and greed; we work under a system of exploitation and violence, from which we demand to be protected, if only for the honour of the country." Even that protest proves that some advance had been made since my visit; for

at that time the question, "Are we still under slavery?" need not have been asked.

(9) Whether the attempt to bring this form of slavery under the jurisdiction of the Labour Department in the League of Nations at Geneva will succeed, one cannot yet be certain (1925).

(10) In February, 1925, an Englishman, who had been shooting in Angola, but had not landed on the islands, told me that forced labour was almost universally practised on the mainland, especially for plantations and road-making, but he had not seen any gangs of slaves being marched down to the coast for export.

## CHAPTER V

### UNDER THE TSAR

"This unfortunate and entangled young man, recognised as the leader of 130,000,000 people, continually deceived and compelled to contradict himself, confidently thanks and blesses the troops which he calls his own for murder in defence of lands which he calls his own with still less right."

Tolstoy on Tsar Nicholas II during the Russian war with Japan.  
(*Manifesto published in the "Times" of June 27, 1904.*)

**I**MMEDIATELY on my return from Central Africa (July, 1905) I found myself involved in the enormous upheaval that had been rumbling in Russia for more than thirty years, and was then rapidly increasing into a power destined to overthrow the Autocracy twelve years later. The disastrous war with Japan had been declared in February, 1904, and events followed quickly. In June of that year General Bobrikoff, the Russian tyrant of Finland, was assassinated. In the next month the assassination of Plehve, Minister of the Interior, in St. Petersburg, followed, and even in England hardly a sigh or protest was raised over his fate. In November and December the Zemstvos petitioned the Tsar for an elected Legislature of two Houses, together with freedom of conscience, of the Press, of meeting and association, equal civil and political rights for all classes and races, and similar forms of justice for peasants as for other people. The birth of an heir to the ill-fated throne had already so inclined the Autocrat to clemency that, as father of his people, he abolished the punishment of flogging among his grown-up subjects, even in cases where they had been unable to pay the taxes due. And just after our Christmas he issued a Manifesto that, where the need of change had been proved, he would take the matter into consideration.



But with the New Year (1905) a new force had appeared. Hitherto the revolutionary movement had been inspired, conducted, and carried out by men and women of the educated classes—students, journalists, doctors, barristers, and other professional people belonging to the division of Russian society called “The Intelligentsia.” But now the revolutionary workman appeared on the scene, and we have lived to see what a difference his appearance made. At first he was organised into “The Russian Workmen’s Union,” under the presidency of Father Gapon, who had won influence owing to the working people’s astonishment that a priest should take any interest in their affairs beyond receiving their fees for birth, marriage, and burial. In January, strikes began in the iron, ship-building, cotton, and cloth works along the Neva and the Schlüsselberg road, and on the 22nd of that month, Father Gapon organised a procession of some 15,000 working men and women to lay a petition before the Tsar in his Winter Palace. The petition, protesting against a bureaucracy that had brought ruin and a shameful war upon the country, called for the election of a Constituent Assembly by secret ballot. It was framed in terms of child-like faith in God and in the Tsar as a benevolent father of his people. In Sunday clothes, bringing their children, bearing sacred ikons and banners, and singing devout and loyal hymns, the procession approached the great square in front of the Palace, and from three sides it was met by volley after volley of fire, killing or wounding about 1500 people. Meantime the Father of his People slipped out of the backdoor and disappeared down the river to another palace. That was “Bloody Sunday” or “Vladimir’s Day,” so called after the Grand Duke Vladimir, uncle to the Tsar, who was supposed to have given the order to shoot. What an opportunity the Tsar then lost, and to what a destiny did a moment’s cowardice conduct him !

Next morning, Father Gapon wrote to his Union : “There is no Tsar now. Innocent blood has flowed between him and the people.” Disturbances broke out in various industrial

cities of Poland, especially in Warsaw. A few weeks later (February 17th) the Grand Duke Sergius, uncle to the Tsar and conspicuous for cruelty and peculiar vices, was assassinated as he drove into the Kremlin of Moscow. In spite of the Tsar's soft words and vague promises, the disturbances continued. In June the battleship "Kniaz Potemkin" mutinied in the Black Sea, shelled Odessa, and sought refuge at the mouth of the Danube. In September a race-feud arose between Tartars and Armenians in Baku, threatening the destruction of the oil wells. On October 19th the conclusion of peace with Japan was announced after prolonged negotiations in the United States, and Russia abandoned all for which she had so long striven in the Far East. Two days later the railwaymen struck, demanding the election of a Constituent Assembly by universal suffrage. Count Witte, who had succeeded Plehve as the Tsar's chief adviser, replied that no cultivated man in the entire world favoured universal suffrage, but liberty of the Press and public meeting would shortly be granted. Five days later a Council of Labour Delegates, sitting in St. Petersburg, declared a general strike throughout Russia, and the general strike shook the Tsardom at last. On October 30th the famous Manifesto was issued promising personal freedom and a Constitution, and instituting a State Duma or elected Parliament.

This Manifesto was greeted by an outburst of joy unequalled in the melancholy annals of Russia. Righteousness and peace kissed each other upon the streets; and so did professors, students, and working people. Red flags paraded the squares; generals saluted them, soldiers joined in the Marseillaise of Labour. On November 4th an amnesty for all political offenders was proclaimed, and the old liberties of Finland were restored. On November 17th another Manifesto reduced the peasants' payment for their lands by one-half after the following January, and abolished it altogether after January, 1907. These payments had been enacted after the liberation of the serfs in the early 'sixties,

and had already covered the economic value of the land many times over, but the Manifesto had the appearance of generosity. Meantime the Council of Labour Delegates had made their first mistake in declaring a second general strike, and finding that this kind of action can seldom be repeated they were compelled to withdraw the declaration on November 20th.

My natural anxiety to visit that vast and little-known land, especially in time of revolution, had been increased by a peculiar trouble in which my friend Brailsford had become involved. Although at that time he had never been in Russia, his knowledge of the country and its people was extensive, and his sympathies naturally inclined to the side of all advanced parties there. Accordingly, when a Russian exile asked him to procure a passport by aid of which another exile could return to his country with pamphlets and educational literature forbidden by an obscurantist Government, he had readily complied, and having obtained the passport had forgotten all about it. But one summer day, a crashing report was heard in a main street of St. Petersburg, and the Hôtel Bristol went flying in fragments through the air. Unfortunately, the fragments of the unhappy revolutionist, who was concocting a bomb for other purposes, were also scattered far, and, more unfortunately still, the wreckage was not complete. For upon entering the shaking ruin of the hotel, the police discovered that the bedroom of the unhappy revolutionist remained more intact than his body, and underneath the bed still lay enough of the passport in a leather case to reveal the name of the applicant to whom it had been issued—a man who had no interest in politics, but had applied out of friendship. One can only suppose that the Spirits Ironic, spoken of by Thomas Hardy, had been at their work.

Thereupon the Russian Government appealed to the British Government for protection, and Brailsford, with his theatrical friend, was brought to trial (July 26th) before the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Alverstone, still better known,

I suppose, as Sir Richard Webster, a rather heavy type of the pompous old school, but reputed learned in the Law and a notable cricketer in his better days. The Attorney-General, Sir Robert Finlay, and Sir Edward Carson prosecuted for the Crown, and in the main trial Mr. John Simon defended. In a subsequent trial (July 31st) upon legal points, Sir Robert Reid ("Bobbie Reid," then on the edge of becoming Lord Chancellor as Lord Loreburn, himself too a conspicuous cricketer in his Oxford time) generously undertook the case for a nominal fee. The trial attracted much attention, and many distinguished people were present, either to give evidence in Brailsford's favour, as Leonard Courtney (also on the brink of becoming a Lord) and C. P. Scott, the honoured editor of the *Manchester Guardian*; or simply out of personal friendship, as Laurence and Barbara Hammond, afterwards to be known for their social histories, and Frank Hirst the economist, Jane Malloch Brailsford, wife of the defendant, and many more. But I was disappointed in the proceedings. I had hoped that counsel or Brailsford himself would take the line that to spread literature in Russia and so to help in breaking down an atrocious tyranny was a meritorious act, no matter by what breach of the passport laws it might be accomplished. For in those happy and glorious days, passports were rather a joke than a serious necessity, and they were never used for any European country except Russia and Turkey. One no more thought of getting a passport for travel on the Continent than of taking a hamper of English cooking to France, and there was then no store of "broody Brigadiers" to sit and sit at passport offices, making a fuss to justify their pay.

A verdict of "Guilty" was of course inevitable. The Spirits Ironie had seen to that. But I should have relied on the first of those two grounds publicly to denounce the tyranny when I had such a fine opportunity; and on the second to induce a merely nominal penalty. The eminent barristers on the contrary argued this and that, appealing to

precedents and worrying over definitions, all of which appeared trivial or irrelevant, having no bearing on the real point at issue. As a result the accused were fined £100 each, and the whole amount was paid by Brailsford, with the help of his many admirers. The really shameful part of the matter was that for many years the Foreign Office refused him any passport, no matter where he was going.

During the trial I was able to take his place of leader-writer on the *Echo*, going down to its office at six o'clock every morning. After my first leader, the paper gasped. After my second, it suspended publication. That was on a Thursday, but, recovering a feeble animation on the Friday, it seemed to require a *coup de grâce*, which I gave it on Saturday morning. So, after a long and honourable career, it breathed its last. It is fair to say that, having been acquired by a noble army of pro-Boers and Pacifists, it was already moribund when I offered my services. But the event added only one more to the remarkably long list of daily, weekly, and monthly publications at which I have been "in at the death," or which, in Fleet-street phrase, "have been shot under me." In fact, during those very weeks or months, another famous but ill-fated newspaper only just escaped my contributing to its ruin. For, with much flourish, much expenditure, and still more errors, the *Tribune* was then being started, and Leonard Hobhouse, good journalist and better philosopher, who was editor only of the leader-page (think of it !), invited me to join as leader-writer and war-correspondent. But I can claim no share in the collapse of that notorious enterprise; for, after my habitual hesitation, I happily refused the splendid offer, which, until the inevitable doom was fulfilled, would have made me richer than I have ever been. The fact was that, under Robert Donald, I was still writing leaders for the *Daily Chronicle*, and my heart was set on Russia. At last he generously agreed to my proposal to go, and the only obstacle was the bodily suffering which Africa had left with me, keeping me in perpetual torment with horrible

suppurating sores on both legs, so that, without morphia, I got no sleep but rolled all night in anguish on the floor. I feared that the Russian winter would freeze the lead-lotioned bandages on the wounds and drag them more open, which also happened. But, as with most people, desire defied fear, and in the middle of November I started, being "seen off" at the Port of London by Robert Lynd, that fine Irish patriot of Protestant Ulster descent, not then risen to fame as one among the best of essayists.

I went by sea because the Russian railways were closed by the general strike. The little Russian ship, "Irkutsk," took me on board, much against the owners' will, for with passengers they were compelled to take a pilot, and I was the only passenger, so that I suppose they lost about £20 by my presence. As the captain could speak only ten words of English and I only ten of Russian, the conversation was neither exhilarating nor intellectual. But as we steamed slowly through the Kiel Canal, a great German ship passed us going west, crammed to overflowing with Russian refugees, who, waving caps and clothes and babies at us in triumph, shouted the Russian Marseillaise of Labour, the same tune as the French, except for a queer little addition to the last line signifying "Forward, forward, forward!" On November 21st, we put to shore at the revolutionary town of Esthonian Reval. Fortunately for me, the second general strike had come to an end the day before, as mentioned above, and that night I reached St. Petersburg by the first train that ran.

On entering any great and unknown city curiosity gives me no rest, and the excitement of being in St. Petersburg was in those days overwhelming. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy had suggested a vision of it, but here was a reality entrancing and terrible. Here was the Nevsky Prospekt, so long and broad; here the haunted Winter Palace, red upon its square; here the great churches marking history; and, nobler than all, here was the tumultuous Neva, leaping in sunlight, rushing down from the vast lake not far away,

bearing slabs of ice upon its blue surface, but not yet frozen up as I was to see it later on, when women were doing the family washing in square holes they had cut through the ice itself, and men were squabbling with them over the right of fishing in the holes that the women had cut. From the bridge across to the Islands, I looked up the brilliant river to the thin, gilded spire of St.-Peter-and-St.-Paul gleaming in air, and knew that under the spire stood the silver coffins of the Tsars, and around it lay the imprisoned champions of liberty in cells below the water's level. Up and down the parade between the back of the Winter Palace and the river, huge and shining horses, three abreast, were dragging the rich and noble for exercise in ornamental carriages. In the Opera House, Grand Dukes and generals, plastered thick with stars and medals, sat at ease to contemplate the dancing women, carefully counting the pirouettes of each twinkling foot, and applauding in proportion to their number. And in the expensive restaurants, expensive courtesans sat offering themselves for sale, where, as "Saki" said to me, they would not have been allowed to sell white mice.

But it was not for such amusements that I had come to the land of violent contradictions, and letters from my revolutionary friends in London soon admitted me to very different scenes. First I attended a meeting of the "Intelligentsia" demanding the abolition of capital punishment, and there I listened to a Professor who, with Russian melancholy, had compiled a "History of Assassination by the State." When he announced that first he would read the long roll of these who had been executed for their love of freedom since the death of Nicholas I, the whole audience rose in silence and remained standing in silence while one might count a hundred, as when a regimental mess drinks in silence to fallen comrades. But what struck me most in that meeting, as in all Russian meetings of the time, was, first, the inexhaustible patience of a Russian audience, which would sit as though enchanted through prolonged

discourses that seemed to end in nothing ; and, secondly, the more natural trait that the greatest applause was always given, not to the finest speaker, but to the man or woman who had suffered most for the cause. But, indeed, the eloquence of nearly all speakers was amazing. Obviously it did not come from practice of rhetoric ; it came rather from generations of suppression, as when a dam bursts and the reservoir floods the valley. It was the same with the conspicuous power of the political cartoons, which appeared suddenly in every paper and on every blank wall. It seemed as though all Russians possessed an innate genius for speech and satiric art.

But my next meeting was of greater significance for the future. In the west of the city there stood a decrepit hall dedicated to "Free Economics"—a peculiar title for those times. This had been seized by the "Central Strike Committee," or "Council of Labour Delegates," as their place of assembly, and there I was admitted by a revolutionary compositor, hairy as John the Baptist, and as expectant of a glory to be revealed. Into the chamber were crowded about five hundred representatives of the main industries—railways, textiles, ironworks, timber yards, and others, each delegate representing about five hundred workmen. Most of the women wore the Russian blouse in scarlet to show their opinions ; most of the men the blouse in dark brown, not needing to display their opinions. All blouses were buttoned close up to the throat and gathered round the waist, low down, with leather belts. At a central table sat the Strike Committee under its president, a compositor named Khroustoloff—or Nosar, as his real name was—a man of about thirty-five, pale, grey-eyed, with long fair hair, not a strong man, and then worn out with excitement and sleeplessness. For the committee sat in permanence all night and day, and when I left at an early hour of the morning, nearly all the delegates were still there, discussing for their lives. The question was whether to declare another general strike in hope of winning the eight-hours' day.



After listening with the imperturbable patience of mountains to innumerable reports from various parts of Russia, the executive withdrew to consider their decision, and the delegates were called into groups by trades : " Weavers, this way, please ! " " Railwaymen, this way ! " " Engineers, here ! " So it went on till at last the executive re-entered. Their decision was against another general strike ; wisely against it, for the terror of the general strike was wearing thin, and the Government were already taking heart to pursue the customary policy of imprisonment and execution. But in that meeting of the Strike Committee I was watching the origin of the Soviet which, in twelve years' time, was to make itself known to all the world, and I have since been told that Trotsky himself was present.

To see what the workers' life was like I often walked along the Schlüsselberg road, which runs up the left bank of the Neva to the Ladoga lake, where stands that ill-omened fortress, the Bastille of the Russian revolution. The road ran through the manufacturing district, and mills were built on both sides of the river—iron works, cotton mills, woollen mills, paper mills, and candle works, some of them managed by English overseers. Hours had fallen from seventy-five a week to sixty-two and a half after the October strike, and now arose the question of an eight-hour day. Wages went by piece-work, and varied according to skill, but no wage was over thirty shillings a week, and the average, including women and girls, was about fifteen shillings. Food consisted almost entirely of soup made from bad meat, black bread, pickled cucumbers, and unlimited weak tea, without milk, but syrupy with sugar. Sunday was sanctified by a vodka debauch, from which the Government derived the steadiest part of its revenue. The people lived in wooden huts, usually one room to a family, but sometimes four families to one room, separated by modest partitions of shawls or washing ; and the rent was from fifteen to twenty-two shillings a month. For furniture I never saw anything but a table, stools, the bed, and a chest for clothes.

The men washed once a week ; I was not sure about the women. But as the Orthodox Church makes the salutary rule that a man must wash before going to service, the men went to the public baths on Saturdays, sluiced themselves down with hot water, and lay steaming on shelves, brushing their skin with branches of birch. On the whole the people were clean in themselves and their rooms. Nearly all the mill-hands kept a close connection with their villages, repeatedly passing to and fro according to the requirements of the land. For they all retained that passion for the land which is the ruling instinct of the Russian people. Nothing could induce them to believe that land could really belong to nobles or princes or any idle proprietors. Land could not belong to people who did not work it ; of course it could not. The land belonged to the peasants, and if only the Tsar knew what the peasants suffered because other people claimed their land, he would give it back. As Stepniak said in his book on "The Russian Peasant," that simple faith was the tragedy of Russian life.

In St. Petersburg itself I made many friends during that happy and hopeful time. Most of them, among the Russians, were Social Democrats, pledged to the strictest doctrine of Karl Marx ; some were Social Revolutionists, favouring the peasants rather than the town-workers, and more inclined to "Terror" as their instrument in overthrowing the tyranny ; others were Anarchists, a small party, also inclined to "Terror," but violently opposed to the idea of a State as such and protesting against centralisation, bureaucracy, and the infringement of personal liberty in any form. Like nearly all Englishmen, I was by nature most drawn to the Anarchists, but Revolutionists of all degrees extended to me an amiable welcome, and a tolerance which they were far from displaying towards each other. In one "political" club, for instance, I found the long room that served as restaurant sharply divided between Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists, one end being held by each party, with no communication over the neutral ground. The

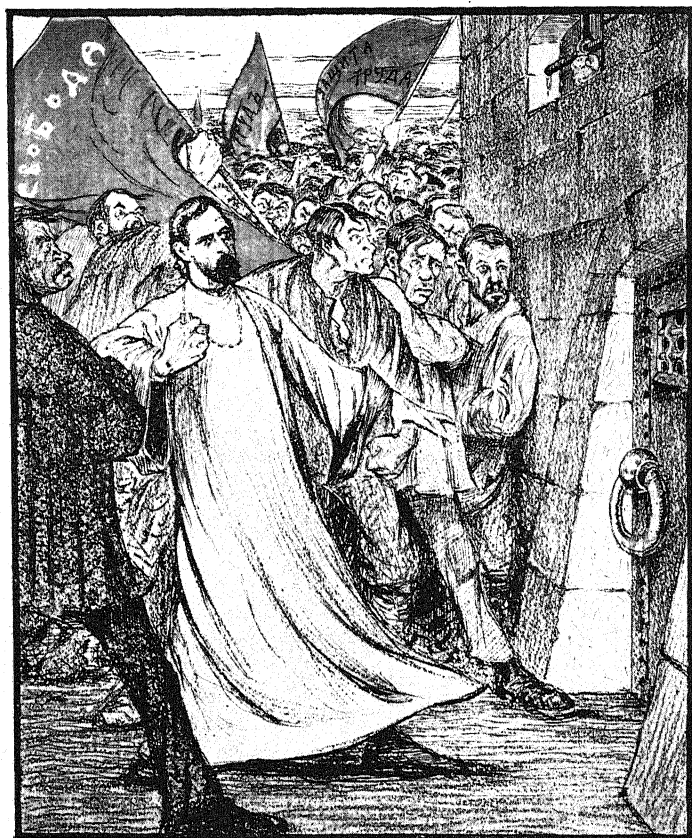
young men and maidens sang different songs at each end at the same time ; but all were serious, nobly serious, as indeed people are likely to be when their cause is a matter of life and death. I talked there in German to one girl of seventeen. She was a Pole, but I have forgotten to which party she belonged, and so has she. "Fair, with a high forehead, small, straight nose, firm little mouth, and clear, shining eyes, like ice," was my description of her, and she insisted to me upon the entirely equal comradeship existing between men and women in "The Movement." But, alas ! she had to admit one weak point : "There are a few light and rather pretty girls," she said with a sigh, "who almost spoil it all. I cannot understand them either logically or psychically. I cannot speak to them, their mentality is so difficult to understand. With me all men in the Movement are comrades and nothing else." She herself had endured a sham marriage with a student in order to get a passport to the University, but I wonder if she ever came to understand those "rather pretty" girls any better, logically or psychically.

Among the most rigid Social Democrats sat one woman who was certainly neither light nor rather pretty, but only famous. She was Vera Sassoulitch, who, in 1878, had attempted to murder the older Trepoff, father of the man who had just before this time dominated St. Petersburg as Chief of Police. On trial before a jury she had been acquitted, and hers was the last political trial in which a jury was allowed. Now, under the amnesty, she had just returned from Geneva, old, grey, and wrinkled, but I found her sitting almost every night at revolutionary meetings, talking, writing, or stitching with unflagging energy. On her face and in her pale grey eyes was a fixed and beaming smile, as though to say that in such times it might be very heaven to be young, but it was not bad to be old and watch the fulfilment of ancient hopes.

My glimpse of another significant figure was brief. I had been present in the early morning at meetings in the vast

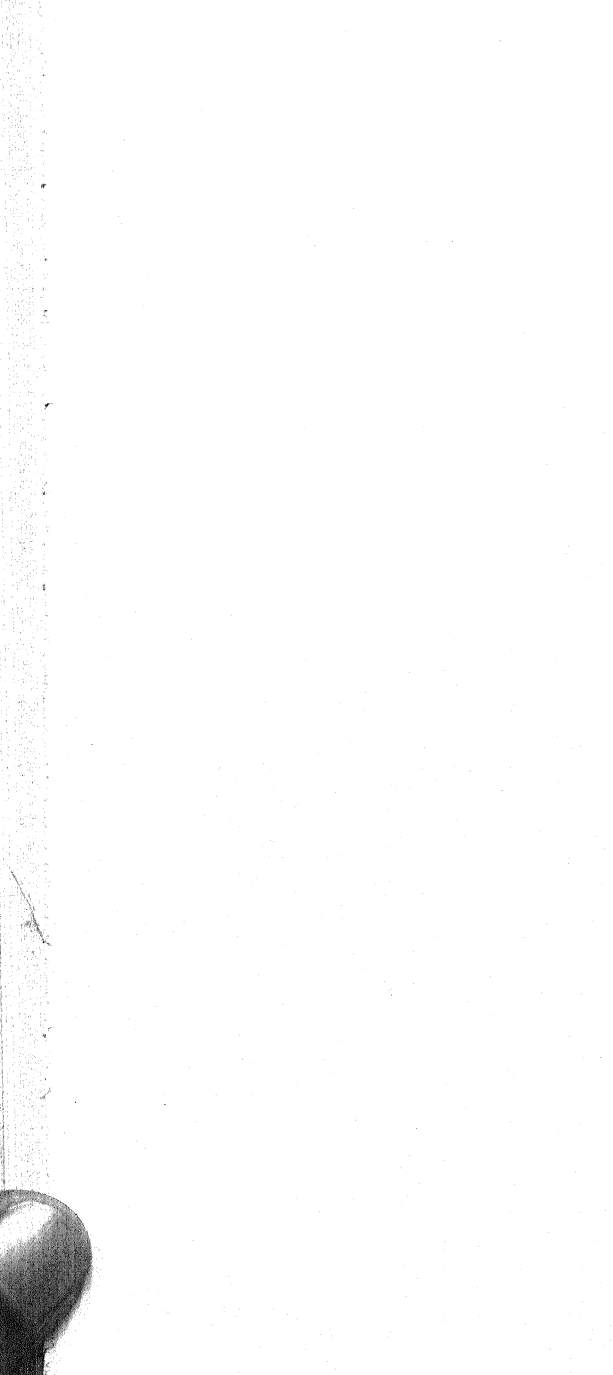
sheds known as "Salt Town," where one meeting had gathered to restore the Union first organised by Father Gapon, and another meeting, of Social Democrats, had gathered to break it up. For Marxists, like Catholics, would drive mankind to salvation by one creed alone, and if heresy interposes, they feel defrauded of their right to redeem the world. The Gaponist meeting was also haunted by the usual Government spies, employed under the foul system of hiring censors, blackers-out, interpreters, letter-openers, secret police, cabdrivers, porters, hotel keepers, and provocative agents who seek their meat from Governments, not only in Russia. But, in spite of panics and turmoil, the Gaponists stood their ground. They sang the noble Russian hymn that consists of the one line "To their eternal memory," three times repeated ; they made brief speeches in commemoration of "Bloody Sunday" ; and then they broke into groups for the formation of the Unions again. But suddenly a secret message warned me to follow a devious route to a little restaurant in a distant part of the city. And there I found Father Gapon seated at a table with a bottle of beer before him.

There was little of the priest left about him, unless it was his evident want of common knowledge. He had been in London and in Paris since his one great day ; had cut his hair and beard, and put on modern clothes in place of the survival in classical raiment that most priests prefer. His figure was slight, the face thin, the eyebrows delicately arched, the rosy blood just showing under the pale brown skin—so rare a misfortune in a Russian ; and, indeed, some said he was a Dnieper Cossack, some a Greek. The eyes were very transparent and of lightish brown, always cast on the ground or looking sideways with a furtive or timorous expression. The whole appearance revealed a delicate and sensitive nature, crafty rather than resolute, and child-like rather than mature. At once I detected in him that ready yielding to common pleasures of which his priesthood had till lately deprived him—the temperament that made him



FATHER GAPON AT THE DOOR OF THE TSARDOM

*A Contemporary Cartoon*



love the money which converted Paris and London into glorious bazaars where the precious toys were real, and the dolls were living women, all made to squeak and shut their eyes.

He conversed on the dangerous aggression of the Social Democrats, who hated a Social Revolutionary more than they hated a Grand Duke, just as a true Calvinist in old days enjoyed burning a Catholic more than a Jew. But while he was pleading the cause of the peasant, counting over four-fifths of Russia's population, warning whispers were heard, and the picturesque little figure suddenly vanished, and when the danger entered the room, we were all drinking beer over a sleepy game of cards. That afternoon (December 4, 1905) Father Gapon escaped through Finland into France, where pleasure absorbed him again. But whence came the money without which living dolls and other delights are not to be enjoyed? Dark rumours stole around. In a few months he returned to St. Petersburg. A little way out from the city, there stood a deserted villa. While I was again in Russia in the following May, Father Gapon was found alone in that deserted villa, hanging by his neck. For betraying the revolution he met a traitor's doom, and nearly twenty years later I became intimately acquainted with his executioner. So died the man whose one great effort had shaken the Tsardom more than all those of his martyred predecessors.

Among the few English left in the city I found some excellent friends, as among the Russians. Some of the correspondents were conspicuous men, or have since become conspicuous. Harold Williams was there, a devoted supporter of "The Movement," learned, accurate, ready to take big risks, very attractive, soon to be known as the author of "Russia of the Russians," one of the most vital books written by an Englishman on Russia, and later to be known as a vigorous opponent of the Bolshevik Government from his high position on the *Times*. Rothay Reynolds was there, favoured in Russian society, though a Liberal and

lately converted to Roman Catholicism. And hunting in couple with him was Hector Munro ("Saki"), lately from Malay, shrewd, cynical, abhorring all Liberalism and sceptical of all enthusiasm, a joy in conversation, and a master of the short story, whether charming or satiric. Some ten years still separated him from death in the trenches of France. W. T. Stead had just got away through Finland when serious trouble threatened, though loath to abandon the Tsar, over whom, having been received at least twice into audience, he loved to imagine himself extending an almost paternal protection. But certainly the most notable of the correspondents was Dr. Emile Dillon, of the *Daily Telegraph*—notable for his linguistic learning, his knowledge of Near Eastern affairs, and, at that time, above all for his intimate relations with Count Witte, who was striving to rescue the Tsardom from the abyss by gentle doses of Liberalism and compliance. I had met Dillon in Madrid seven years before, and now I met him again in the British Embassy where Cecil Spring-Rice invited us both to lunch. I was afterwards told that the famous correspondent expressed extraordinary pleasure at finding me there, but at the time he concealed his delight under a veil of silence, unbroken, I think, by a single word throughout the meal. I thought at the time he was simply afraid, as so many correspondents are, of giving away some little item of special information; but perhaps he was suffering from melancholy or other illness. For I suppose that only some physical disability could make his aspect of the whole world so uniformly despairing.

Cecil Spring-Rice I had known slightly when he was at Balliol, and had since admired for his action in Persia—action only too excellent to please the authorities in Russia. In the absence of Sir Charles Hardinge, then Ambassador, he, as First Secretary, stood in charge of the Embassy during this difficult time, and was fulfilling the duties with perfect tact, courtesy, and precision, all in spite of his fine faculty for epigram and shafts of criticism, dangerous in any high official, and, as one heard, subsequently fatal to his success.



in Washington during the Great War. But even more valuable to me then, and for many years later was my friendship with Oliver Wardrop, Consul-General in St. Petersburg. In every foreign city, whenever over a doorway I see a brilliant yellow lion fighting for the crown with a brilliant yellow unicorn on a white ground and surrounded by a black oval frame, I turn in at the door, knowing I shall certainly find a welcome from an experienced man, and probably hear the best information that can be made public, and sometimes the best secret information too. But in all my long experience I have never found a better welcome or more valuable information than in that British Consulate at St. Petersburg, looking over the Neva. For Oliver Wardrop (also a Balliol man, like Spring-Rice) was a true scholar as well as a complete man of business. He had been many years in Kertch, and knew the Caucasus well. He and his sister, who lived with him and was a woman of unusual refinement and intellectual interest, had made an intimate study of the Georgian language and literature—a difficult task. Though unable, owing to their position, to take part in active politics, they were sympathetic with “The Movement,” and it was always a delight to enter their quiet rooms and listen. The Consul was afterwards appointed to Bucharest till his retirement in 1910. But in the War he returned to public life, first, I think, in Norway, then as the Allied representative in Georgia, and now (1925) he strives to maintain British justice in Strassburg. When his sister died some years ago, he founded a Georgian Scholarship in Oxford to her memory; for indeed the Georgians all regard her almost with the adoration given to their Saint Nina, who first told the mountains of Christ’s life and death sixteen centuries ago.

Hearing that violent revolution had already broken out in Caucasian Georgia and in the Baltic Provinces, I stood in doubt to which region I should hasten. But the doubt did not last long, for the appeal of the mountains was irresistible as usual, and to reach the Caucasus I must go

through Moscow. So to Moscow I went, my happy fate as usual guiding me to the centre of trouble. In that beautiful city, with her white churches surmounted by bulbous domes of brilliant blue or glittering gold, minute snow was lashing through the streets, and thawing as it fell. Trailing and slothering in disorder through the slush and wind, came a loose string of soldiers, led by a handful of ragged cavalry on hairy little horses. Half a battalion of foot followed them, covered with filth, their uniforms torn and patched, some in low flat caps, some in high and furry caps, matted with mud and snow. Their faces were yellow, thin, and seemed bemused with wonder. Behind the infantry dragged a rambling line of various carts, and in the carts were stretched muffled and pallid forms, bound up with dirty and bloodstained bandages. It was the dismal procession of heroes returning from war, the first instalment of the ruined army which had gone out to fight Japan, and at last they were completing the sum of 5000 or 6000 miles of travel from the starving East. Down the dirty streets they drifted and disappeared, the Reservists being discharged at barracks and going to swell the crowds of beggars who, with threats or blessings, violently demanded the milk of human kindness at every corner. But one night I came upon a group of them seated around a fire which they had lighted in the middle of a street. They were staring like imbeciles into the flames, but one of them, swaying gently to and fro, continually repeated the soothing words: "At home and alive! At home and alive!"

The whole city was filled with confusion and turmoil. Wild meetings were held in every shed, and often in the open air. Wild papers and leaflets appeared. The big restaurants were empty but for the hesitating bands of music. The postal strike, which I had seen beginning in St. Petersburg, was in full force, and I had to post my letters to the *Daily Chronicle* in the stockings of Lancastrian women fleeing from the wrath to come in the cotton mills of Yaroslav on Volga. Shop-assistants struck, tea-packers struck, school-

children and domestic servants struck. It was said a famous regiment, the Semenyoffsky Guards, were on the point of striking, and three of the men appeared at a public meeting, denouncing their officers and tearing off their uniforms amid ringing applause. The students struck, and Professor Manouiloff, Rector of the University (a great authority on the Irish Land Question, since he was not allowed to write on Russian land) told me he had shut the University because he did not want a Fort Chabrol in the quadrangle, and there were 7000 students ready to build one. Laws, as he said, were old before they were born; we were living in a turbulent chaos, and no one knew what to do. Mounted Cossacks galloped into every crowd, slashing with their lead-loaded whips (*nagaïkas*) at any nearest head, and leaving on their track the littered bodies of men and women, pouring blood from scalp wounds or broken skulls. Nevertheless, our Consul Grove, a keen, alert, and military kind of man, said he thought no actual revolution would break out till after the Russian Christmas, and if I wanted to leave Moscow, now was the time. I hesitated again about the Caucasus, but here was Tolstoy, living hardly a hundred miles away and I could see something of the Russian peasants where he was. Owing to the reputed peril of going out into the country, because the peasants were slaughtering every stranger, I had trouble in finding a man to accompany me as interpreter. But at last a Rigan Russian, speaking German, consented, and in mid-December we started for Toula, a typical Russian town, standing where two main roads cross each other in the centre of space, and containing a Government small-arms factory where nineteen workmen on strike had been shot a few days before.

Next day (December 16, 1905) I drove up a long hill to a plateau over which snow was drifting with such violence that the huge black horse dragging the sledge kept facing round as though to appeal to us as reasonable beings to return. Horizon, track, and every mark were lost in whirling grey, but after we had dubiously advanced for two

or three hours, the snow stopped and gleams of sun peered through purple clouds. Then indeed I beheld the beauty of Russia. Flat line after flat line of whitened plain extended before me, sometimes touched with pale crimson by the low and wintry sun, sometimes silvery as a distant sea. Long streaks of forest came into view, looking brown or purple in the distance, though chiefly made up of young silver-birch trees, their silky white stems flecked with black. I saw a few oaks and an occasional pine, but birch was the prevailing tree, because it burns best, and supplied almost the only fuel for Moscow, and even for such locomotives as could not get oil. Birch logs filled most of the little wooden sledges that passed us now and then, drawn by miserable ponies so caked with mud that their furry coats looked like a crocodile's armour. The peasants floundered alongside, clothed in sheepskin jackets, gathered round the waist with belts that made the skirts stick out as some shelter to the high top-boots of felt or bast, rarely of leather. The men wore caps, the women knotted handkerchiefs or shawls. Otherwise there was no difference in outward appearance.

At last we came to a village, typical of that part of Russia, which was neither rich nor starving. About forty wooden cottages ran along each side of the road in single file, thatched for the most part, but, in some cases, roofed with iron plates painted green, as is the Russian way. Each cottage had a separate wattle shed for fodder and stores, but in winter the cattle lived in the dwelling-houses, so as to enjoy the warmth of the stove radiating into both compartments of the interior. By invitation, I entered one of the cottages, passing through the animals' compartment, where a sickly cow was dragging out the winter. Her companion, the horse, had been sold to pay the taxes for the Japanese war and the debt to the village usurer or *koulak* (i.e. "fist," a significant name), who was to lend more money for the hire of another horse when spring came, a horse being essential for the tillage of the strip of land apportioned to the family. The animal and human compartments were

separated by a wooden partition, but the huge white stove warmed both, and, as is usual in peasants' cottages, it was penetrated by mysterious holes and caverns for cooking, baking, and the roasting process which served the family for a bath. Two broad wooden shelves were fixed beside it, the upper one for the parents' bedroom, the lower one for the children's nursery. There was no bedding of any kind, except one old shawl on each shelf, and on the lower shelf five children, almost naked, were sprawling about, biting each other's legs and arms in the joy of an imaginary game of wolf, all acting as wolves so as to bite the more. They could never leave the cottage all at the same time, because there were not clothes enough to go round. The furniture consisted of a wooden box, which was the seat of honour given up to me, a short bench, a table, and a small wooden loom of primitive make, on which both the husband and the wife could weave a coarse stuff dyed with red madder, such as the women use for their petticoats on Achill Island.

While I was conversing through my German-speaking friend about the payments still to be made for the land since the liberation of the serfs forty years before, an old man entered with a canvas bag over his shoulder, sat down as for an afternoon call, and joined in the conversation, casually laying his bag on the table with its mouth open. Just as we were going out again, the woman, as though by stealth, slipped some squares of black bread into the bag, and the old man swung it over his shoulder and walked off, without further remark on either side. That was the way of keeping old or unfortunate people alive till better days might dawn, and to me it seemed an improvement upon our workhouse, casual wards, or Charity Organisation Society. At parting, I looked again at the peasant and his wife, in their clean poverty, with the marks of passionate labour upon them, and their five children growing up around their knees. It seemed hardly credible that these were just the kind of people who had been marched off to the village police court, tied face downwards to a sloping bench, had

their clothes turned up, and were flogged with whips or rods because they could not pay the taxes for the interest on French loans, or the upkeep of the famous ballet in the State Opera House. It was but another evidence for my old conviction that when you touch the State you touch the devil.

That was a conviction heartily shared by the venerated and venerable old man whose country house of *Jasnaia Poliana*, or "Bright Plain," stood near the village. I had introductions to Tolstoy from friends of his, and, with his usual generosity, he received me at the door of his separate room, half study, half carpenter's shop. A few hours afterwards, while waiting for a midnight train at Toula, I wrote down the following impression of the man whom I regarded as the noblest incarnation of the Holy Spirit then living :

"He is seventy-seven, and looks much older than his portraits ; has begun to shrink into himself ; the grey-green eyes are now sunk very deep under the shaggy brows ; the grey hair is very long, hanging over his ears, which are large and rather projecting. The top of his head is almost bald ; the beard white and shaggy, but neither thick nor long. The nose broad and soft, moving up and down as he speaks, probably owing to loss of teeth. The general look is one of profound thought, benevolence, and simplicity. No trace of the 'cunning' which Macgowan (an American writer) said he found there. Hands long, thin, and admirable. The figure very spare, but not so tall as I am. Dress a dark grey Russian shirt without collar, a girdle round the waist low down, brown breeches, and high top-boots of leather, in which he had been walking round his little estate with the dogs."

He spoke English at first, not very well, and getting tired of the effort, turned to German, which he spoke much more easily. Almost at once he began on the land. A manifesto from the Tsar proclaiming the right of the peasants to the land, he said, would be the best solution of the present troubles. Less than a third of the cultivated land was held by the peasants, and less than a quarter of the cultivable land

was used at all. There was plenty of support in the land if only it were decently cultivated, being first restored to the real workers on Henry George's or some similar plan. He quoted Henry George once or twice, and referred to Peter Kropotkin's books on "intensive culture." Indeed, Kropotkin interested him very much, and he enquired if he were coming back to Russia, thinking he might return with safety then.<sup>1</sup> With their long experience of a communal system, the peasants, he said, could manage very well for themselves, without any State at all, as had been proved by the Communal colonies settled in Siberia. For Communism ran in the Russian blood, and among the peasants the idea had never been lost.

When I observed that perhaps the industrial towns must be considered too, he looked rather depressed and said :

"Yes, the town influence is our greatest danger. Towns are the places where mankind has begun to rot, and, unhappily, the rottenness is spreading. The mistake of our Liberal politicians is that they are always preaching the blessings of some English or American constitution. But those constitutions, having once been realised, have already become things of the past. They belong to a different age from ours, and an ideal, whether in statesmanship or art, is never a thing of the past, but always of the future. For Russia we ought to aim at something entirely different from your worn-out methods of government."

With a touch of increasing solemnity, he then proceeded :

"You are a young man" (I was getting on for fifty then), "and I am old, but as you grow older you will find, as I have found, that day follows day, and there does not seem much change in you, till suddenly you hear people talking of you as an old man. It is the same with an age in history ; day follows day, and there does not seem to be much change, till suddenly it is found that the age has become old. It is finished ; it is out of date.

<sup>1</sup> But Kropotkin did not return till after the Revolution of 1917, and, as an Anarchist, he was not welcomed by the centralised Bolshevik Government.

"The present movement in Russia is not a riot ; it is not even a revolution ; it is the end of an age. The age that is ending is the age of Empires—the collection of smaller States under one large State. There is no community of heart or thought between Russia, Finland, Poland, the Caucasus, and all our other States and races. What have Hungary, Bohemia, Styria, or the Tyrol to do with Austria ? No more than Ireland, Canada, Australia, or India has to do with England. People are beginning to see the absurdity of these things, and in the end people are reasonable. That is why the age of Empires is passing away.

"They tell me, for instance, that if the Russian Empire ceased to exist, swarms of Japanese would overrun our country and destroy our race. But the Japanese also are reasonable people, and if they came and found how much better off we were without an Empire, they would go home and imitate our example."

The whole argument, running on with a half-ironic simplicity, was superb both in its daring speculation and its quiet confidence in human reason. For twenty years all the brazen trumpets of vulgarity had been blowing the note of "Empire" over us as though it were the one sufficient purpose of existence, and here was this rugged old man calmly telling me, as though it were something of a platitude, that we had just come to the end of an age—the age of Empires ! How far has his prophecy been fulfilled ? The Russian Empire has been lopped, though its poisonous branches are again extending over the Caucasus. The Austrian Empire has gone. The German Empire has gone. England has almost shed Ireland, and would shed other regions directly they wished to go. It is not a poor fulfilment in less than twenty years.

For the rest, he seemed interested in what I told him about Central Africa and the slave trade there. He asked many questions about the National movement in Ireland, but when I rather carelessly told him that the Irish intellectual movement was producing many poets, he said that poets did very little good, and he was sorry to hear of their



increase. He had read all Shakespeare once straight through in English, and twice straight through in German, but thought very little of his works, and was glad to hear that a man called Bernard Shaw, who wrote in England and seemed to be a Puritan, agreed with him. As to Dickens, he read him through time after time, and was actually at the moment reading "Our Mutual Friend" again. For he had not slept well, and so was disinclined to work, though as a rule he worked hard every day. He had so much still to accomplish, so many plans to carry out that he could not hope to finish half of them in the years that might be left him. He told me, in passing, that he could not believe I was an Englishman; I had not the look or manner of the English type, but reminded him of Michael Davitt, whom he had met twice, and whose work he much admired.

After this conversation he led me into a long room where his large family (except his wife, who was from home) was gathered for dinner, together with various relations and friends. They received me with the Russian courtesy, speaking to me in German or in English, which two of the women spoke a little, and one perfectly. She was the wife of the eldest son, a pleasant, easy man, with the aspect of an English squire. In fact, the whole scene was like a house-party in an English country house, and the guests had been beguiling their leisure with making embroidery, playing battledore with racquets and a soft ball, pushing a marble up a kind of bagatelle board, examining their guns, and walking with the dogs. At the casual meal of Russian dishes watered by *kvass* (a gentle beer), they maintained a quiet converse, marked by the gracious silliness of good breeding, and the "cheerful stoicism" which justifies the aristocrat's existence.

It was a fine instance of educated reserve and self-control, for deep anxiety filled all hearts. I myself, bringing them letters (for the post had stopped) brought also the news that the country house of a friend and neighbour had been burnt down by his peasants, though the family had escaped with

life. One of the ladies had just heard of a terrible riot and mutiny in the garrison town where her son was stationed. Another lady's son had recently married a rich heiress, whose three residences had all been destroyed by the peasants. From every side came tales of loss and danger while they were waiting helplessly there. Polite, charming, highly educated, well dressed, healthy, fond of sport and country life, full of good will and high intentions, they were so like our own country squires and small nobility at their best that I could not imagine myself such a dreary revolutionist as to refuse them sympathy. And they made no protest or complaint, except to say that they were getting a little tired of the perpetual parallels drawn between themselves and the aristocrats of the French Revolution, whose heads fell so rapidly. There were two marble busts of Tolstoy in the room, and two portraits—one as an oldish man at a writing-table, the other as a man of forty, with brown hair and beard, meditative and very fine. But I noticed that the man of genius sat almost isolated and had separate courses, and when I heard a few years later that he had shaken off family, house, comfort, and all in hope of pursuing devoted righteousness alone, as an Indian Sanyasi might pursue it, and so had died in a final protest against this carnal world, I was not surprised.<sup>1</sup>

Literary critics talk about a sharp dividing line in Tolstoy's life and thought, but I could never find one. All the principles of his later teaching are revealed in "*Anna Karenin*," which seems to me the greatest work of imaginative prose ever written. If one must find fault with such a glorified spirit, it would be in the remorseless consistency of its logic that I should seek it—a logic which, having condemned all pleasures of sense, would doom the human race to rapid extinction because life cannot be handed on

<sup>1</sup> In my book called "*The Dawn in Russia*" (1906; out of print) I described this house-party as though it had no connection with Tolstoy. For identification might have exposed the family to danger from both sides.

without pleasure. At so ascetic a doctrine the people who profess and call themselves Christians ought not to be astonished, especially as it is practised by few. But I suppose we must still be a little careful lest, as the Germans say, we throw away the child with the bath-water in which it has been washed.

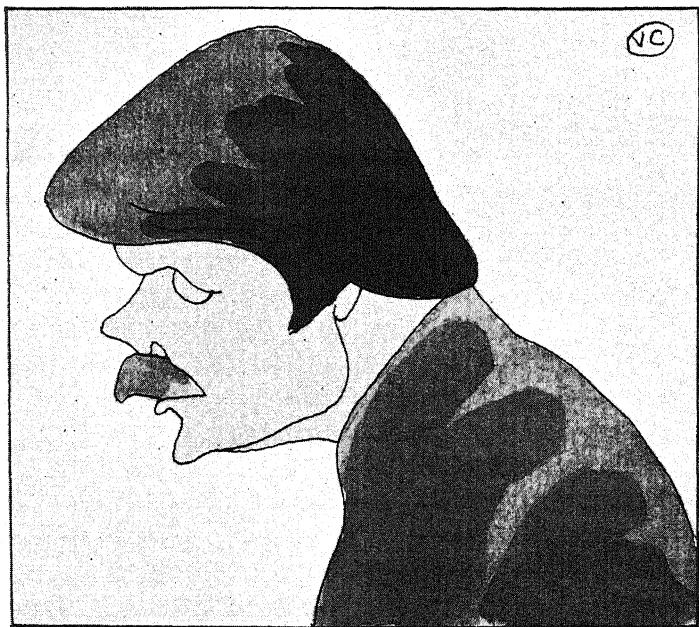
## CHAPTER VI

### THE DAYS OF MOSCOW

"Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,  
Streams like the thunderstorm against the wind."

*Childe Harold : Canto IV, 96.*

IN Moscow everyone was wondering what line the moving finger of history would write next. Round the big post office groups of postmen and clerks on strike stood all day long upon the pavements, like working bees round a ruined hive. The Government dismissed a thousand of them offhand, and declared any strike among Government officials to be a criminal offence. But still the strikes went on, and the Unions grew in size and number. The railway-men, the floor-polishers, the tailors, the waiters, the printers, the shop-assistants, the bathmen and bathwomen—all struck or stood ready to strike when the moment came, and all were essential to the comfort of the comfortable classes. Few of those classes who were not in "The Movement" were pleased. One of them wrote to Maxim Gorki's paper, the *New Life* (*Novoe Zhisn*) to ask why it was that patient workmen and dear, gentle peasants whom advanced thinkers used to hold up to him as saints, suddenly showed themselves so disagreeable and dangerous. And Gorki could only answer that in ordinary times the comfortable classes had never turned from their games of ambition, wealth, or pleasure to consider the workers and the peasants, except in the easy distribution of doles, which were part of their own comfort; and so, if a bad time had come, and a worse was coming, they must acquiesce in the natural turning of the wheel, which had been slow to turn. It was in vain that



MAXIM GORKI  
*A Cartoon of 1905*



Professor Miliukoff, a man born for moderation and sweet reasonableness, also brought out a new paper called *Life* (*Zhizn*), solemnly appealing for unity among the progressive parties in face of the common enemy. "When Absolutism is at last overthrown," he pleaded, "there will be time enough to discuss the divergent lines of our several programmes." There is an English hymn describing heaven as a place "Where congregations ne'er break up, and Sabbaths have no end." But I doubt if even that blissful realm would give time enough for Russians to discuss the divergent lines of their several programmes. Yet the advice was sensible—sensible to commonplace, and useless in times of high exhilaration, when the moderate man is left to evanesce in his moderation.

I wandered up and down the city from conference to conference or from friend to friend. For the moment we were still revelling in liberty, living under an anarchy almost fit for the angels, who by their divine nature are a law unto themselves. But, unhappily, it was a liberty modified by murder, and for some weeks a murder a day upon the streets was a fairly constant average. Bare-footed, long-haired beggars, the very heroes of Gorki's tales, the ragged supermen of misery, sprang from obscure corners. People walked warily, keeping one eye behind them, and turning sharply about if they heard goloshes padding upon the snow. Often at night, as I went up and down the rampart of the Kremlin, and watched those ancient white temples and their gilded domes glittering under the moon, I noticed that any passer-by would skirt round me in an arc, or if he came suddenly upon me, he ran. My intentions were far from murderous, but all of us were living in the haggard element of fear, not having yet realised that the only decent way to live is to take your life in one hand and your money in the other, and both hands open.

St. Nicholas is naturally a favourite saint in Russia, because, on his way to see Christ, he stopped to help a peasant's cart out of the mud and got his nice clothes dirty.

So they gave him four Saint's Days in the year, just as our kings sometimes have two birthdays. The St. Nicholas Day of December 19, 1905, was also the Tsar's christening day (or did he have four ?), and it was expected he would come to Moscow to proclaim a free Constitution and the partition of the Crown-lands among the peasants. He did not come, but religion and loyalty prepared to celebrate the day in characteristic fashion. The patriotic association called "The Black Hundred," "The Hooligans," or "The Order of Russian Men," according to taste, issued a manifesto inciting to the slaughter of all Jews and foreigners, and though the more moderate of the priesthood wrote to the papers urging the populace to act like Christians, what was the good of that ? Had not Christians always slaughtered Jews ? So the Black Hundred (the "Hundred" (*sotnia*) meaning a company or platoon) together with other children of darkness rose at dawn a-tiptoe for bloodshed. The night before I had seen a drunken soldier, while singing revolutionary songs, quietly killed in a back street, and a student beaten to death by a mob outside my window. All seemed propitious for the occasion, and early in the morning the priesthood assembled in the Kremlin, with a hundred banners of gold and silver gleaming in the frosty sun, close beside the piled-up guns that Napoleon had left behind. There were the bishops in hats of brass or gold, shaped like Byzantine domes and sprinkled with shining glass or precious stones. There were the priests in robes stiff with gold and many-coloured embroideries, some with hair hanging far down their chests and backs, others less shaggy in devotion. Thousands of people surrounded them, bowing and crossing themselves, or flinging themselves on the ground in adoration—people of all classes, peasants, workers, and even the wealthy. For I saw ladies, deep in furs, signal to servants to lay down cushions or squares of mackintosh on the particular spots where they wished to worship without getting their knees wet.

Service was held in the main cathedral, and a shorter



service specially for the new Governor-General in a chapel up the "Lion Staircase," where no unhallowed or un-uniformed foot might tread ; and then priests and banners, supported by a detachment of Cossacks, mustered in line beside the Great Bell of Moscow, and marched off under the Gate of the Saviour, where every Russian lifts his cap. With them they bore the Ikon of the Iberian Virgin herself, copied from the Georgian Virgin of Mount Athos ages ago, and now brought out from the shrine at the Iberian Gate, and paraded for the occasion in a wooden case. Out into the "Red Square" (*krasnaya*, red or perhaps splendid) they filed, and gathered round the stone platform where Ivan the Cruel used to enjoy the spectacle of executions, just opposite his many-coloured church built by an Italian, whose eyes were put out that he might never design another so gay. There a second religious service was held, and at noon the guns boomed a salute. The priests withdrew to their sanctuaries, and the long-expected moment for massacre arrived. Springing on the balustrade of the platform, an orator lashed the crowd to fury. With wild cheers and shouts the people began to rush up and down, like caged wolves before feeding-time. Raising the beautiful Russian hymn and shaking his fists at the bright infinity of space, the orator marched the length of the square, the crowd swarming after him, thousands strong. Through the Iberian Gate they trickled, and in one great tide swept up the main street, called the Tverskaya. It was a rich street, made for plunder, but blood was the first demand.

At the square before the Governor-General's house there was a pause for more speeches and appeals imploring Heaven and the Tsar to show more energy in the destruction of their enemies. Admiral Dubásoff, Governor-General—tall, pale, white-haired, with long white moustache and pointed white beard, afterwards to be known as "The Butcher" or "The Admiral of the Street"—appeared upon the balcony, and in loud voice proclaimed his delight at seeing so many true Russian citizens on the side of the Tsar, to whom he would

at once telegraph how confidently he could reckon on the unshaken devotion and unflinching courage of ancient Moscow. It was a little unfortunate that just at that moment someone close to me raised the cry, "The students are coming! The students! The students!" and like a wind, terror swept over the patriotic citizens. Sledges dashed away in flight. Plunging, falling, and crashing into each other, the devoted patriots ran for their lives. Following my useful rule of standing still in panics, I soon found myself alone upon the square. It was silent as peace. Nothing had happened. No students had come. The Governor-General went indoors, I suppose to dispatch his telegram in praise of patriotic courage. Gradually a few of the brave crept back, and tried to resume their murderous aspect. But it was no good. Slaughter was postponed, and all went home to dinner.

Next day (December 20), having heard of severe fighting in the Caucasus, and of a communal form of society set up in Georgia, I bought a ticket for Baku, and settled myself comfortably down in the nice warm train, which was crowded with humble families going home or to relations for Christmas. Waiting is never unusual in Russia, but after an hour or two I felt an uneasy movement in the air and perceived that the engine had been uncoupled, and the steam from the heating pipes was rushing out, leaving the train cold as a corpse. "General strike at noon!" cried a porter, and gathering up the few things I had selected to cheer the journey, I emerged. The registered luggage could not be recovered, and ultimately it went duly down the line to Baku, together with hundreds of dying geese and ducks, loads of vegetables, and barrels of sugar that made the train like an enormous Christmas hamper, and taught many a hungry peasant on the route the delightful significance of the holy festival. But the families who had looked forward to such a happy journey with their bottles of milk and baskets of food, were only with difficulty induced to leave the train, and most of them pitched their little encampments

in the station waiting-rooms, and so remained for a fortnight, the atmosphere becoming every day less and less like the perfumes of Arabia.

That afternoon "The Movement" proceeded to cut off the city's supply of gas, electricity, and water.<sup>1</sup> The water was restored in a day or two, for the characteristic reason that the poor were suffering for want of it. But for the remainder of the disturbances we sat or walked in darkness through all the long hours of the Russian night. And the disturbances soon began. For one more day the revolutionists hesitated. They told me they were not ready. They had a lot of revolvers (chiefly the automatic "Brownings"), but only eighty rifles, and no guns. They thought they might be ready by April. But the Government was ready now. While a party of revolutionists were discussing time and space in the top story of a tall house called "Fiedler's," just opposite the British Consulate, the Government brought up two or three guns and poured shells into the building at fifty-yards' range. A bomb was thrown in return. On both sides a few were killed, and so the bloodshed began. It was the night of December 22-3, 1905.

I heard nothing of these events next morning, for it is one of the peculiarities of Russian life that the Last Judgment might be held in one street while, unaware of your danger, you continued increasing your record of sins in the next. But I did hear that some English overseers with their families in the cotton and lace mills south of the city were in great danger among the Russian workpeople. Driving rapidly out in a sledge, I found that the mill-hands had risen, certainly, had been charged by Dragoons and Cossacks as they paraded their red flags, and were hanging

<sup>1</sup> I was ordered to write letters to the *Daily Chronicle* rather than telegraph, except at times of crisis. But as this was obviously a time of crisis, I sent a short telegram describing the situation and noticing that the water supply was cut. To my regret, an amazing version was engendered in the office upon my simple statement of fact. When the paper reached me some weeks later I read: "The supply of water is cut off, but blood will flow instead!"

indignantly about, threatening us with fists and stones as we went among them, but the English overseers and their families themselves refused to believe in danger, and maintained our national indifference to unusual circumstances. Except as fairly well-to-do representatives of overwhelming capitalism, they were not hated. Quite the contrary ; and they refused to shift into the city for safety.

Indeed, it suddenly became clear that safety was not to be found in the city. For as I walked up a little rising ground, and, looking back, saw the great city, much as Napoleon first saw it, glittering with domes and crosses, distinct with towers and lines of brilliant light under the frosty sun, while all the church bells were booming and tinkling for the vigil of some saint, I heard the crash of a big gun among the bells. Again and again the sound was repeated, and in half an hour I was crossing the bridge over the little Moscow river and hastening up to the Red Square. Then I found that in the night the revolutionists had attempted an attack upon the north-west segment quarter of the city. Moscow is laid out in a rough circle, conforming to the ancient town-walls, now called the Boulevards. The outer arc of the segment attacked was the Sadovaya, or Garden Circle. Nearer the centre came the arc of the Boulevards, and the whole segment was bisected by the main street of the Tverskaya, running north-west from the Red Square to the Sadovaya, and cutting the arc of the Boulevards at the Pushkin statue, close to which stands the Strastnoi Convent with its commanding tower.

Within the segment were included the Government House, the Prefecture of Police, the great Central Prison, from which exiles started for Siberia, and three important barracks. The object of the revolutionists was to push down through this wedge or segment from the Sadovaya towards the Government House and the centre of the city,

hoped thus to check the advance of troops from either flank. But their plan was vague. Having read that barricades were proper to revolutions, they built them anywhere and anyhow. Next day I counted a hundred and thirty, and I had not seen half. Tubs, shutters, gates, iron railings, telegraph poles, front doors, and tram-cars were hurriedly piled across a street and left there as a menace to tyranny ; but so flimsy was the obstruction that a push would knock it over. The best barricades were erected along the Dolgoroukovskaya, just beyond the Sadovaya. For there the whole of an electric train was ranged across the street, and at one strong position some ingenious boys had piled up snow more than breast-high, and then turned water on to it, forming a really impenetrable barrier of ice. All the barricades otherwise seemed to me like the work of enthusiastic children playing at war, and when at last, after the three-days' fighting they were torn up and burnt, I passed over the smouldering ruins with the regret one feels for broken toys.<sup>1</sup>

But the barricades were not intended to be held or "fought," and there was very little firing over them. The real danger came from the houses on both sides of the barricaded streets, the revolutionists firing at the troops as they climbed over the barricades, and retreating through the backdoors when the rifle-fire became too heavy, or when the guns were brought up to batter the houses themselves. It is nervous work to be an innocent witness in street fighting. The firing comes from many sides at once, and you are exposed to equal danger from friend and foe. There is no definite front and no definite rear. You seem to be all flanks. Both flanks are uncovered, and there is no line of retreat, for at any moment your communications may be cut. I cannot be sure whether the regulars or the revolutionists regarded me with the greater suspicion, for both fired at me

tried to make my way round by side streets to the points of action.

Of course, it was my duty to see everything possible, but many peaceful citizens took equal risks merely for the fun of the thing, or just to maintain the habitual routine that all men love, or to lay in provisions for Sunday, or as being possessed by the curious instinct which drives even the gentlest men and women against their will to witness war and death. Thick groups gathered under shelter of street corners, or up passages, or even behind the porches of big shops and banks, and every now and then someone would rush across the open just for sport. So it was that the cook in my little hotel, leaving his kitchen to see the fun, got a bullet in his heart and cooked no more. So it was that, as I was crossing the Boulevards near the Pushkin statue, a rosy workgirl with a shawl over her head ran towards me through the cover of the snowy trees, and just as she reached me I saw a little red splash fall on her cheek. She stood still, gasping with astonishment, and then sat down in the snow, crying at the sight of her blood, while I tried to mop it up with my handkerchief. But finding it was only a cut and not a hole, I signalled to her to run, and away she went for the Petrovka, screaming for her life. Directly afterwards I came upon a well-dressed woman, possibly a revolutionist, who had been shot through the skirt and was bleeding horribly, though a man kept twisting two handkerchiefs round her thigh. We carried her about a hundred yards along the Boulevard to a large house where a Red Cross flag was flying, and though we came closer to the firing-party at every step, we were not fired on. I found the same kindly protection when, after running back at full speed along the Boulevard, I turned sharply left into the Mala Dmitrovka, which was deserted but for one man, who was hurrying along with his head down. Suddenly he fell down just in front of me. He too had been shot in the thigh and the blood was running over his boot and soaking through his trousers. I signed

far away, and, putting his arm round my neck he began to hop back. But the pain was too great, and he was turning green. Laying him down on a doorstep I tried to stop the flow by binding a handkerchief over his trousers, for it was too deadly cold to take them off. But this was useless and he was becoming unconscious, when I perceived some faces watching us from a window. I waved to them, and three men and a girl came out, bringing a chair, on which we carried him back into the Boulevard and to the Red Cross house. On leaving him there I perceived that from first to last we had been exposed to sharpshooters posted on the tower of the Strastnoi Convent close by, and all our running and caution had been useless.

It was in that same street of Dmitrovka that, on the second day, I found a woman stooping over a body which lay on the kerb-stone. It was a boy of about fifteen, dressed in his school uniform of little blue cap and long grey overcoat. I suppose he had come out to see a real battle, with men firing real bullets and slashing with swords. His boots were close together, pointing upwards; his white-gloved hands were thrown out upon the snow like a cross; and through his mouth was a dark red hole. The woman had seen him fall and had run out to help. She now brought a red and white tablecloth from her house. We wrapped him in it and with two or three others carried him to an ambulance-room beside an ancient red-brick church. But he was already dead.

Similar mournful events marked every hour of those three days, as I wandered cautiously from point to point. On the first evening I had been invited by Marsden, the *Standard* correspondent, to a flat far away westward on the Boulevards, where he lived with his beautiful Lithuanian wife, and by creeping in pitch darkness through the Old Town and round the Kremlin along the deserted river bank, I contrived to get there, but return was impossible. For a "minor state of siege" had been proclaimed, and that means that soldiers

claim on the Government for reparations. You die "at your own risk," which is always dangerous. Before dawn a small party of revolutionists came to the flat, muffled in overcoats, their hats drawn over their eyes, sleepless with excitement, always fingering the revolvers in their pockets, and bringing news of terrible events and various slaughter. Making my way round by the University to the Theatre Square, where eight guns were stationed in reserve, I found that a gunshop, which I had previously noticed with expectation, had been attacked during the night by the revolutionists and plundered, in spite of two attempts at defence by the soldiers. People had afterwards gone prying about with candles and matches in hopes of finding something worth stealing, when just at midnight the whole place blew up, making a huge gap in the Metropole Hotel, and I saw charred bodies, crumbled into cinders like burnt paper, being removed in a dust cart.

But there was no time to reflect upon such transfiguration. Throughout the second day the fighting was at its worst. Curiosity and the sporting spirit had died away. Death was too near and obvious now. Wherever one went, the crash of shells and the whizzing of bullets were almost incessant. Into a backyard at the end of my street the wounded were continuously carried, and the dead were laid in line under a large shed there. Admiral Dubásoff had given orders that the Red Cross and people helping the wounded should be fired upon just like others, and consequently the sledges refused to carry the wounded, and soon disappeared altogether from the streets. I made my way across the Sadovaya up the Dolgoroukovskaya, where the chief revolutionist force was gathered, apparently awaiting the approach of the Government troops, and by the sound of the shells crashing into the houses up the Tverskaya it was evident that the troops were steadily advancing. But there seemed no directing spirit—no general or Staff—among the revolutionists, and I repeatedly came upon bands of devoted men



definite object, except the resolve to do something for the cause. When I found them fortifying some really good position and offered my help in carrying material or in building, the offer was coldly received, or rejected with threats. And indeed a Napoleon would not have been of much assistance.

Going up early in the morning of the third day (it was our Christmas Day), I saw little change, and yet I felt that all was over but the running. I was quickly surrounded by revolutionists, who seemed displeased with me, and were still painfully well armed with revolvers. On working backwards towards the centre I came upon troops still firing, searching, and arresting, and they seemed equally displeased at the presence of a foreigner. The fighting continued throughout the day, but still I felt that the revolution was over; all the more when, in the evening, the revolutionists offered six shillings and a revolver to anyone who would join for three more days' service. More still when one of the leaders told me that this outbreak was only a dress-rehearsal, and the real performance was coming later. Of course he was right. The real performance came twelve years later, but what part the actors in the dress-rehearsal took in that final performance I cannot say.

The revolutionists themselves put the number actively engaged on their side at only 500, which is absurd. Equally absurd was the Government estimate of 15,000. I think that about 1500 was fairly near, but, amid such turmoil, figures are worthless. The official estimate of the revolutionists and civilians killed and wounded was between 8000 and 9000, but no one ever knew. All the students, both boys and girls and most of the revolutionists, stitched little labels inside their clothing so that their parents might get the news of their death; but the bodies were piled up and carted into the country for burial with such indiscriminate carelessness that I doubt if the precaution was of much avail, and when I was in St. Petersburg some weeks later a

having drifted about the line in the long interval. The Government troops engaged in Moscow numbered eight infantry regiments, two Cossack regiments, one and a half regiments of dragoons, and two brigades of artillery. The damage to property was estimated at £10,000,000, besides the losses incurred by a week's interruption of work for bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, hotel companies, theatrical managers, actresses, prostitutes, journalists, and all such as live by supplying the well-to-do with pleasure.

On Thursday, December 28, the revolutionist committee ordered their people to cease fire and scatter to their homes or into the country, and Admiral Dubásoff commanded that all shutters should be taken down, all doors opened, and business resumed on pain of martial law. So "intercourse was resumed," and the friends of law-and-order breathed again. But next day the depressing sound of firing was renewed, though at a more comfortable distance. Two miles west of the Kremlin lay an isolated manufacturing district called Presna or Presnensky, separated from the main city by some ponds with little streams running down into the Moscow River. On this district of about one mile square stood factories of cotton, furniture, varnish, boiler-making, and sugar, some of them under English management. Among these factories the workmen had declared a little revolution of their own, with a girl leader, sentries, pickets, and fighting force all complete, and for at least one day revolution reigned supreme. But, unhappily, on that very day a regiment of the Semenyoffsky Guards arrived from St. Petersburg, under Colonel Min, who was afterwards assassinated by a woman; and the Semenyoffsky Guards, not having been allowed an opportunity of killing Japanese, pined for active service. So to them fell the duty of slaughtering the workmen—to them and the gunners, who were posted at five points round the district and soon set alight to all the factories and workmen's dwellings with their shells. It was as leisurely and secure a piece of bloodshed as was ever seen—one long massacre of men, women, and children, who were blown up,

shot, or hewn in pieces with delightful ease, and all the next night the flames were seen raging against the sky.

Next morning (Sunday) I contrived to penetrate through the cordon of troops and guns into the centre of the factory district, and found nearly all the buildings still pouring out volumes of smoke and flame. The wretched survivors had hoisted white flags wherever they could stick them, and were trying to get away with such bits of things as remained—feather beds, furniture, cooking utensils, and the toys already bought for Christmas. When they came to the line of soldier pickets, every box or bundle was searched and the contents thrown out upon the snow. The people also were searched, the soldiers thrusting their hands into the breasts and under the skirts of the girls and young women. I saw one girl searched in this way six times within twenty yards. "God spit at them!" muttered the women as they crawled away. The thermometer stood at 18 degrees of frost, and there was no shelter left.

Next day (January 1, 1906) I found the ruins were held by Cossacks and the Guards, and the bodies of three leaders whom they had just bayoneted were lying outside a shed. The remaining revolutionists were cooped up in a sugar-mill yard, while the leaders were sorted out for execution. These were brought forward in batches, and shot down by a firing-party, three at a time, till a heap of dead was piled up. Two of them, perhaps as a practical joke, were ordered to march round a corner as though they were free. They went carelessly, with their hands in their pockets, but when they turned the corner, they were faced by eight rifles at the present, and in an instant they fell dead. Such executions went on in that district and throughout Moscow for a full week, and even if only a tenth part of the other abominations reported to me were true, I could not speak of them. For the horror of the deeds was too atrocious to be thought of, if we would retain any belief in the human kind as being on as high a level as apes.

In the midst of these scenes came the Russian Christmas

Day (January 7), and I witnessed the ceremony in the enormous church of Christ the Saviour, built in commemoration of Napoleon's retreat. By ten o'clock the vast spaces under the domes were packed with men and women, all standing up, except when someone forced the neighbours to make room for prostration on the floor. The Governor-General arrived with the Military Staff, and the scene became radiant with uniforms. Then the service began. In the centre stood an archbishop in gleaming mitre, his robes stiff with gold, his appealing arms supported by gorgeous priests. Between him and the altar veiled books were carried to and fro, and other books were brought with an escort of priests to be kissed, or were read in the unintelligible mutter of solemnity. Figures with leonine manes bore candles up and down. The archbishop raised two candles high in air, crossing them so that they guttered down his robes, while he turned to the points of the compass to bestow his blessing on all. Old priests and young, glittering in the uniforms of holiness, came to kiss his hands, and in superb humility he was supported to the altar. A veiled basin was brought for him to wash in. A golden priest knelt with the sacred towel hanging round his neck. The archbishop washed, and upon the neck of the golden priest he replaced the sacred towel.

The re-incarnation of Christ began. On each side of the altar a choir of men and boys, attired in scarlet and black and gold, raised the glory of Russian music in alternate chant. From arch to arch ran the illumination of kindled tapers till the marble walls and gilded capitals shone with points of fire. Muttering and sobbing with devotion the masses of mankind swayed up and down, as they bowed and crossed themselves in the gloom below. Struggling to touch the polished pavement with their foreheads, they fell upon the ground. The booming of distant bells was heard. A small bell tinkled close at hand. In front of the altar stood a black-maned priest, and with uplifted arms and upturned face, he called upon Christ to come. He called and called

again, his immense voice bellowing round the spaces of the church, as though an organ had been wrought up to full power and one deep note held firmly down. So he called upon Christ to come—Christ the Saviour, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

## CHAPTER VII

### SINNERS, SAINTS, AND KINGS

“By the torture, prolonged from age to age,  
By the infamy, Israel’s heritage,  
By the Ghetto’s plague, by the garb’s disgrace,  
By the badge of shame, by the felon’s place,  
By the branding tool, the bloody whip,  
And the summons to Christian fellowship,  
We boast our proof that at least the Jew  
Would wrest Christ’s name from the Devil’s crew.”

*Browning : Holy Cross Day.*

SO religion and bloodshed kissed one another, and in Moscow tranquillity was restored. The revolution had failed because the army had refused to “fraternise.” As I wrote at the time, put a human being into uniform, feed him, pay him something, give him arms, give him orders, and he may generally be depended upon to shoot his mother. Obedience is the temptation to sloth of mind, and when supported by fear of death, the temptation is almost irresistible. Under modern conditions, a violent revolution cannot be carried through unless the revolutionists win over the army, and to win over the army they must command a public purse. There lay the advantage of our own Parliament in its struggle against despotism : it could draw upon legitimate taxes, the King could only melt down plate. Mine was an easy prophecy, but only after a gap of twelve years’ executions, wretchedness, and the degeneracy of despair was it fulfilled.

From Moscow I passed down to the city of Kieff, famed alike for holiness and intellect in exceptional combination. In those days peasants from all over Russia flocked to Kieff by thousands every year. They came partly to worship in

the darkness of Saint Sophia's ancient church, but chiefly to adore the mummied saints lying in catacombs underneath the monasteries of the Lavra hill, which looks across the Dnieper to the great plain of unenclosed fields and forests beyond. Regardless of such an outlook over earth and sky, numerous saints once spent monotonous years of holy suffering upon that hill, cooped up in niches and holes far below the world's surface, because the torments of our ordinary life were inadequate to their zeal; and in those rock-cut cavities their bodies still remain, obscurely discernible through wrappings of coloured cloth. One of especial sanctity who, indifferent to health, lived for thirty years buried up to his shoulders in earth, stands so buried to this day. Thirty years buried to the shoulders in earth and rock! "How nourished here through such long time?" Wordsworth sensibly asked about the dog on Helvellyn. But let us not speculate too closely upon his physical condition. Rather if we visit him again, let us gulp the holy water which a silent monk presents to departing pilgrims in the hollow of a silver cross, and not refuse it as I did. Whereupon the silent monk poured it down my back, in the hope that, even upon a heretic, the efficacy of so great a blessing might not be entirely thrown away.

Above ground, I discovered no similar evidences of sanctity, unless the indiscriminate slaughter and plunder of Jews may be counted for righteousness. Of this crusading slaughter and plundering there had lately been a surfeit, and the Cossacks who protected the thieves and murderers at their consecrated work were fat with shares of the Infidel spoil. The prisons also were crammed with "politicals," exposed to a raging and deadly typhus; and in the hope of clearing a little breathing space for health, batches were daily executed. Jews and "politicals" were, of course, regarded as fair game, but in general the citizens boasted a temperament that might almost be called gay in comparison with other Russians. They loved to think of themselves as the *Midi* of Russia, the people of the sunny south.

Their University ranked with Moscow's. Their dress was cheerful with crimson and orange, often worked with barbaric embroidery. Their music and dances have passed among us as Russian, but were like nothing else in Russia. Artistic instincts were supposed to run in the blood of all Ukrainians, and Kieff, as the capital of the Ukraine, supplied the whole Empire with singers, actresses, dancers, and women of other trades in which beauty counts high. She had also produced scholars and a few politicians, of whom Count Witte then was chief. The language of the Ukraine (the "Marches" or "Borderland") is a Slavonic dialect, though unintelligible to other Russians, and in those days there was no desire to separate from Greater Russia. It was the Poles that the Ukrainians feared, with good reason as has since been proved. Next to the Jewish religion they hated the "Polish," by which they understood the Roman Catholic. Perhaps it was in protest against Anglican Catholicism that a company of soldiers shortly before my arrival had poured volley after volley into the British Consulate; but more likely their officer was sick of hearing England called "the Holyland of Freedom." Or was it because the men were Kieff Dragoons, and the King of England was their honorary Colonel?

Besides her distinction for sanctity, learning, and gaiety, Kieff is the market for the land of "Black Earth"—the deposit of fertile soil which then supplied wheat for England and much of Europe. In those days Russia's exports were valued at £96,000,000 and the export of grain alone came to rather more than half that sum, naphtha running a poor second, and eggs a good third. In spite of the usual superstitious rumours about danger among the peasants, I drove far out through the scattered villages, and was surprised to find how poverty-stricken the people were, though they fed so many foreigners in distant lands. Most of the cottages had no furniture at all, except two beds (one on the top of the stove, but both entirely destitute of bedding), and the Russian cradle, which is worked up and down by a lever



from the ceiling instead of being rocked to and fro by hand or foot. There was not even a table, a chair, or a chest. The bed served for seat, table, and all. The stove was warmed with straw, for though I passed through the largest forests I had seen in Russia, they all belonged to the Tsar, and no one there might gather a stick. I supposed that the chief reason of this deep poverty was that when, in the early 'sixties, the land was nominally divided among the liberated serfs, the peasants of the "Black Earth," being more numerous, received smaller portions than in other less fertile parts, and the greater fertility never made up for the difference, especially as the purchase money was higher and had in fact become a fixed charge, like rent.

Proceeding to Odessa across a desolate steppe, I found the Black Sea city silent in the grasp of the Black Hundred or "Order of Russian Men"—silent but for an occasional bomb exploding in the main square, or the occasional murder of a policeman. Two days after the outburst of joy at the Tsar's October Manifesto, the Governor-General, instigated by Trepoff in St. Petersburg, had ordained a vast demonstration of the Black Hundred, who, impelled by their religious convictions and lust for stolen goods, had assaulted the Jews with ecclesiastic violence, and laid the whole city for three days at the mercy of law and order. As nearly as possible the Jews formed half Odessa's population of 600,000 living bodies, so that the game for the religious sportsmen stood thick on the ground, and as there was no opposition and no escape, heavy slaughter and adequate pillage rewarded Christian devotion. All the richest shops had been plundered, and in the Jewish dwelling-places, especially in the outlying suburb of Slobodka Romanovka, whole rows of houses stood empty, burnt, shattered, and desolate. In the cemetery, loose earth, scattered over a pit, covered 350 Jewish corpses, killed in one evening. Clubs were the favourite weapons with the champions of Christ, but long knives were found more expeditious for the extermination of Israel's young. Women

and girls were usually flung from the top windows on to the pavements below, and survivors pointed out the spots where they had crashed. Christian neighbours, in explanation, informed me that the Jews of Odessa were of a particularly unpleasant type. I only know that they had suffered a particularly unpleasant fate, and though I could never agree that the Jews are a divinely Chosen People, I fully admit that they are peculiar. Throughout the city the Christians, with the natural instinct of self-preservation, had chalked copious crosses upon their doors, and hung sixpenny ikons over the lintels. Who would not have done the same to save wife and children from being hurled from the top windows? Not the Jews. One would have supposed that at least they might have refrained from flaunting their detested religion in the face of Christian zeal. But upon ruin after ruin I found the surviving owners calmly repainting the Hebrew inscriptions giving to their miserable race the information that here they might find Kosher meat and a Shomer in attendance, and giving to Christians the information that here they might kill and steal without penalty or danger.

A peculiar people, certainly! Seated on the pavement in front of the house where his family had been slaughtered, I found an aged son of Israel selling cigarettes. Before the massacre he had prospered by the sale of secondhand clothes, but having buried his seed and fulfilled the days of mourning, he had borrowed a few cigarettes, had paid for them next day and bought more, had then built himself a little stall, and now intended to start a tobacconist shop upon the wilderness of his former habitation. It seemed to me that all the Christians in Russia, backed by all the power of army, police, autocrat, and Church would never succeed in exterminating a race so obstinately hopeful.

But they were wretched. The whole city was wretched. Most of the religious plunder had gone in drink and women. The rich had taken flight when the mutinous warship, "Kniaz Potemkin," had thrown two shells into the city the

previous June, but they had left behind them a starving host of valets, cooks, nursemaids, housemaids, grooms, coachmen, gardeners, boot-boys, barbers, washerwomen, harlots, and others who depend on the rich for existence, just as the rich depend on them. It is bad for all when the members refuse to feed the belly, but worse still when the belly runs away from the members. A dock strike among the labourers living at the foot of the low cliff along the "front" overlooking the Black Sea had lasted for many weeks, but when hunger ended it while I was there, the men returned to a wage of a nominal twopence an hour, the purchasing value of which was about the same as one penny in Poplar. The University was shut. The Jewish schools were shut. The few soup kitchens for relief were a pitiful sight. Yet in the midst of it all I found the party soon to be famous as "The Cadets" (Constitutional Democrats) toiling at their programme for a Constituent Assembly, Home Rule for the various nationalities within the Empire, and a vast agrarian reform. That little party had a long way still to go, and at what now looks like the end of it, how great a disillusionment!

When I returned to St. Petersburg, I used to attend the meetings of those "Cadets" in a quiet little hall off the Nevsky Prospekt, and listen to their long and abstract discussions, so beloved by the Russian nature, and so futile in a time of crisis. They were a moderate party, hating violence, distrusting haste, believing in law, and beside their platform hung a large death-bed portrait of Sergius Troubetskoy, Rector of Moscow University, who had died suddenly in the previous autumn. Across it was written "The Champion of Freedom," and the memory of his courageous moderation was the watchword of the gathering. For there I met Petrunkévitch, who had succeeded Troubetskoy on the Moscow Zemstvo; and Struve, who had just returned under the amnesty from Paris where he was long known as the editor of *Emancipation* (*Osvobojdenie*); and old Professor Clementz, who had lived so long in exile far

away at the extremity of Eastern Mongolia that he looked like a Mongol savage fresh from icy deserts, but was invaluable as comprehending the monosyllabic squeaks of the Mongol delegates ; and, better than all, there I met Professor Miliukoff, who became and remained the leader of the " Cadets," to be known throughout Europe in after years for his courageous denunciation of Rasputin and other reptiles of Tsardom ; for his brief service as Foreign Minister (with strongly Imperialist leanings) during the earlier revolution of 1917 ; and for his steady opposition to the Bolsheviks for their breach of democracy and of constitutional methods. He was then a bright-eyed, robust, and florid man, a middle-aged, grey-haired youth, abounding in unreasonable and unquenchable hope. He told me that the reaction could not last long. The Moscow rising he regarded as a great mistake, driving him almost to despair. He thought that all the educated and well-to-do people would be set permanently against any change. But the Government's violence had kept them on the side of the Revolution, because they were as much sickened by the slaughter as other people, and had learnt that the Government was the real party of destruction and disorder. " Why ! " he cried in his almost perfect English. " The reaction is already over ! The spirit of the thing is dead." Hope is a leader's most essential quality, but how mistaken even hope may be !

Within a month after the suppression of the Moscow rising, 78 newspapers were suppressed, 58 editors imprisoned, 2000 post and telegraph assistants dismissed, 20 workmen's restaurants closed in St. Petersburg to prevent relief to the unemployed, 17 new prisons opened, 1716 " politicals " imprisoned in St. Petersburg alone, and 1400 " politicals " executed without trial, not including the uncertain numbers put to death in Moscow after law and order had been re-established.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all my former friends were now in prison, either in the great Kresty gaol (the " Cross," so called either from its shape or as being an

<sup>1</sup> Figures from the *Times* of February 24, 1906.

emblem of salvation), or in the St.-Peter-and-St.-Paul citadel, side by side with the coffins of the Tsars, or in "Houses of Inquiry," where prisoners were kept for many months while evidence was being scraped together and their spirits broken. From a friend thus confined I received a letter marked by a broad yellow cross drawn diagonally from corner to corner, showing that it had been tested by nitric acid for invisible ink. To prove what prison meant, I may extract a few sentences :

"My cell is five paces long by two wide. It has a window, the bottom of which is just above the level of my eyes, so that I can't look out. There is a bed, a chair, and a table, all fastened with clamps to the wall. The electric light is turned on for an hour in the evening.

"At six I get up. At half-past six a hand is thrust through the Judas eye in the door with some black bread. At seven a different hand pours boiling water into my jug. I have to buy my own tea. At ten I am led into a little court, where I am allowed to walk round and round for twenty-five minutes with other politicals. If we speak or look at each other, the walk is stopped, and it is my only chance of getting a breath of air. At eleven a bell rings, and the eye is opened for letters or any orders for purchases I want to send. That is allowed only four times a week, and only so long as my money lasts. At the same time a hand pours in boiling water again for tea. For dinner at noon I get a biggish basin of barley or pea soup, or else a thin fluid with scraps of meat and cabbage floating in it.

"There is a rather good prison library, especially strong in political economy.<sup>1</sup> But the pages are defaced by the gaolers, who think the stops and hyphens are signals from the prisoners to each other. When it gets dark in the afternoon, I lie on my bed, or walk up and down the cell, till at eight the electric light is turned on for an hour. At six I get boiling water and soup again. Sometimes letters reach me, but they are always kept till they are old. Sometimes I am allowed a visit of three minutes' conversation through the Judas' eye in the door. Of course the gaoler is always within hearing."

<sup>1</sup> These books were donations from released prisoners.

It was a relief when one day I induced Robert Crozier Long to accompany me over to Kronstadt across the frozen sea. Long was an excellent correspondent, chiefly, I think, for a Chicago paper, but also for the *Westminster Gazette*, then at the height of its power under the skilful and gracious direction of its famous editor, J. Alfred Spender, that model of sweetly reasonable journalism. Long was also known as the admirable translator of the "Reflections of a Russian Statesman," by Pobyedonostseff, the famous Procurator of the Holy Synod, whose book is, I suppose, the finest manual of autocracy ever written—a work which no tyrant's nursery should be without.

So, early one morning, Long and I, from the village of Oranienbaum on the Gulf of Finland, put to sea in a sledge. The tempest called the *vouga* was raging, and driven by a south-west wind, the whirling snow obscured the wide expanse of frozen water so that we could not see from one to another the little Christmas trees stuck in the ice to mark the only path of safety. At three points small wooden huts had been erected as shelters for the lost or frozen. Lanterns on high poles glimmered through the darkness, and, pulled by little windmills, deep-toned bells tolled at intervals. Here and there the ice was piled up by the current, showing a sharp green edge, and at one place a few planks had been thrown across a gaping crack, which split the white field of sea with a dark line of water stretching out on either hand till lost in the storm. It was an evidence of my usual good fortune that the lost and almost blinded driver contrived to hit upon those few planks. The drive across the sea, being only about six miles, should take half an hour, but both going and returning it took us an hour and a half.

On reaching Kronstadt, however, my reward surpassed all expectation. After some difficulty (for a prophet has no honour in his own country) we found Father John of Kronstadt, worker of miracles, intimate friend and adviser of the Tsar and Tsarina, though his influence over the latter was already beginning to shake before the dæmonic presence

of Rasputin. We found him in a large house, which he had fitted up as a refuge for such as stand most in need of miracles. The rooms were filled with iron bedsteads, and the price of a night's lodging was 30 kopecks, or sevenpence half-penny, which was nearly double as dear as the average London doss ; but as the charge probably included a miracle, the difference was not excessive. A crowd of eager women, sparkling with benevolence, clutched my clothes to drag me through a lying-in ward into a still more crowded room, where I was even more eagerly received, for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. I there saw that a small altar had been erected under a brilliant ikon hanging upon the wall, and on the altar, which was a deal table covered with a white cloth, stood an enamelled-iron soup tureen, white with a blue edge round the top, and filled with a yellowish liquid, presumably holy. Before the altar prayed a short, grey-haired figure in a robe of black flowered damask, with a crimson border round the neck and half-way down the back, which was turned towards us.

He was just raising his innocent hands in act of adoration, when, perceiving the religious tumult due to my entrance, he faced smartly round, and came bounding in my direction. I stood my ground and held out my hand, but entirely disregarding that formal sign of amity, he sprang lightly upon his toes (for the top of his head did not reach to my chin), and scrabbled about in my hair with his fingers. It was all so sudden. In five seconds he had blessed me by assault. The women around me sighed their pleasure. "He never bestows on us a blessing like that, never!" they murmured with admiring envy.

When the brief but athletic performance was over, I perceived that he was a trim and ruddy old gentleman, looking about sixty, but known to be seventy-seven, so that even his activity was miraculous. Kindly and innocent he looked, like a good housemaid, having nothing about him of the rapt mystic contemplating eternity. He did not even claim prophetic vision, so that his miraculous gift of fore-

telling futurity must have been unconscious. One of his chief attributes in sanctity was that he had lived with the same wife for fifty years—hardly a sufficient qualification for supernatural powers, one would suppose ; for even among laymen a golden wedding is not unknown. While he still stood before me, beaming goodwill, I noticed a large silver cross hanging round his neck—the Russian Orthodox cross with a short bar nailed slantingly low down upon the shaft, one end higher than the other for the feet of Christ to rest upon ; since by Eastern tradition Christ was lame. Unfortunately, I noticed also that the prophet's right hand was worn, as though with the labour of benediction, and following my glance, he did what was perfectly natural to any Russian saint or lady : he held up his hand for me to kiss. I have often resolved to go through this ceremony manfully, whether with priest or woman, but when the moment comes, my British blood always begins to jib and swerve, like a steeplechaser that cannot be brought up to its fences, and I have never yet succeeded in getting over. So I shook the proffered hand warmly, and the little saint turned back to the altar, taking up the service where he had left off, just as a wood-pigeon takes up his comfortable cadence at the note where last it was broken.

The people renewed their violent prostrations, and when the service was over, the worker of miracles put a great-coat over his robes, goloshes over his boots, and departed down the street, accompanied by an adoring throng. It was hard to realise that the revolutionists regarded him as one of the most sinister figures among their enemies, as one of the most merciless supporters of the Black Hundred, and as vaguely connected with a scandalous Virgin of Kronstadt, who had enriched herself by charging high fees for introductions, and by other methods of vicarious sanctity. I got my blessing for nothing, but only a few weeks before, Long had been obliged to pay two pounds ten for a privilege in no respect more valuable.

By way of contrast, that night I went to a concert given



in the great Conservatorium by "the Proletariat of Intellect"—writers, lawyers, doctors, and students, male and feminine. The music was good but it did not matter much, except when someone sang Schumann's setting to Heine's "Two Grenadiers," ending in the "Marseillaise." The latter was already a forbidden song, but how could one suspect Schumann of revolution? So six or seven times the song of freedom was repeated. Otherwise what gained applause was the reading (usually very poor reading) of short sketches and parables, like Gorki's well-known fable of the serpent and the eagle, in which the eagle soars but dies, and the serpent grovels and lives content. Even so it was not the theme that was applauded, but the reader. There was no chatter about art for art's sake. A man was cheered according to what he had done or suffered for the Revolution. One reader was recalled eleven times, not that he recited particularly well, but it was his own work that he recited, and he had only just come out of gaol.

Over all breathed the sense of community in aim and community in danger. Even in those days the Russian people as a whole were distinguished by an enviable disregard of the differences in rank, wealth, and dress. Partly perhaps it came from the ancient communal life of the villages, and from the friendly relations of serfs to owners as being of one family; but chiefly, I think, from the Russian custom of using Christian names among all classes, so that a brotherly feeling pervaded all. As to dress, many of the students, with long hair all on end, wore the Russian peasant's tunic. The girl students—those indomitable "Kursistki" on whom the soldiers had no mercy—wore the loose black blouse, closely fitting to the throat, and buttoned along the top on one shoulder. The gentler spirits yielded to a tiny edge of white collar above the black. But the blouse of the "militants" shone red, all gules from throat to waist, and the more revolutionary a girl was, the thicker was her hair, and the lower it hung over her eyes and ears. Her little fur cap also had no brim, as others use,

but was plain like a man's ; for a brim was compromise, and down the slope of compromise lies ignoble peace.

On my way through the Baltic Provinces, travelling by night, I was able to fulfil one of many little services to the cause. For when I came to Pskoff, I threw open the carriage window, as I had been instructed, and presently, as by miracle or melodrama (which is the same thing), a human hand was for a moment protruded through it and immediately withdrawn, taking with it a scrap of paper that I held ready under my coat. At dawn I was in Riga, just in time as I quitted the station to see twenty-five men lying in a row upon the sandhills where they had been shot, tied together by feet and arms. So it went on all the time I remained in that beautiful old German town and the Lettish provinces surrounding it. Every day little groups of Letts—men, women, and boys—were hurried by escorts of Russian soldiers away to the sandhills to be shot, usually with a crowd following, much as a crowd follows sheep or bullocks to the slaughterhouse. I saw boys bayoneted before my hotel window, and shot against the wall of the old castle tower. The morning papers had no news but accounts of the shootings, hangings, and floggings at various places out in the country. When I drove far away among the woods and low hills of that beautiful region, I found the people hiding in caves or up the firs and holly trees, in terror of the patrolling bands of Cossacks. Discovering my sympathies, the German-speaking Lett who owned the sledge spread warnings as we went by various cries and signals, sometimes inducing the refugees to emerge from their coverts and converse. At Segewold, where the Russian General Orloff had made his head-quarters, my driver told me he had heard an officer give the order by telephone for a firing-party of ten to attend next morning at six without fail and shoot three prisoners, who were present in the room as he spoke. It was like ordering the funeral lunch in the hearing of a dying man.

The Letts are among the most ancient of European settlers, and scholars told me their language is the most

closely akin to old Sanskrit. They retain an ancient literature of songs, and an ancient art. Even their scattered farm-houses are still built on the ancient nomad lines, being made entirely of wood without the use of nails or other iron, roofed with wooden slabs, constructed in two large central rooms, with a lot of smaller chambers clustering round for the labourers or poorer families, and always having an outdoor kitchen, built like a nomad's conical hut. When the Prussian "Teutonic Order" and the "Brothers of the Sword" extended to them the advantages of conquest and Christianity,<sup>1</sup> they were the more easily reduced to servitude owing to their primitive habit of dwelling in isolation rather than gathered into villages or towns. But in the Russian Revolution they thought they perceived a dim hope of shaking off their German lords, whose country houses they proceeded to burn. In the three Baltic Provinces I believe about 250 "outposts of barbarism" were thus destroyed during 1905, and the German landowners were still longing for vengeance when I arrived.

Few of them had actually been killed. That peculiar feudal respect for "the family" which was thought so sweet and picturesque in the England of last century, still survived among the Lettish peasants, as was seen in an instance narrated to me by the landowner himself :

"One day," he told me, "a deputation of my peasants rang at the front door and said, 'We are very sorry, Master, but we have condemned you to death. You are a good master, and we have nothing against you, but we have condemned you to death. It is because you have more land than we have, and all the land is ours by right, though your fathers took it from us seven centuries ago. Now we are going to nationalise it. We are very sorry, but we have condemned you to death and have come to warn you. We strongly advise you to escape while there is still time.'"

So the landowner drove away, and twice a week while I was in Riga the peasants were sending him and his wife

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's "Frederick the Great," Book II, Chapter VI.

presents of firewood and vegetables because they had heard such necessities were expensive in town.

Even with such advantages, I quite recognised that the lot of the dispossessed landowners was hard. Accustomed, like our own squires, to an active and healthy life in the country, they pined in the town, weary of monotonous idleness, with no farming to superintend and nothing to shoot. When once he had enjoyed the morning's news of floggings and executions, there was little to engage a gentleman's attention till the evening opened a wretched German *café chantant*, providing sweet champagne and half a dozen indifferent girls. It was, as one of the nobility sighed to me, yawning and stretching himself: "I suppose I must go and see that dancer again to-night. She has poor legs, I know, but in these times one must take what pleasure one can." So the unhappy lords of the land rotted at ease, struggling in vain to relieve their tedium by indecent stories and jests, of which the favourite concerned a Lettish school-mistress, who, being dragged into a barrack to be flogged, and not understanding a word of Russian, prepared herself to be violated. That merry jest never failed, and I heard it repeated in four different languages.

Though the habitual executions were proceeding in the neighbouring town of Mitau, my visit there was cheered by the presence of a typical old German parson, who, in succession to his father, had served the people there for sixty years. He remembered Goethe's death, and was a master of German literature. But his chief delight had been the collection of Lettish songs, riddles, proverbs, and legends. Over this labour he had gone blind, but, with wife and grandchildren around him, he had resolved to write one more book, to be called "The Happy Life," when suddenly the peasants attacked his parsonage, shot his sexton, threatened his daughter, burnt his library, smashed his china, trampled on his harpsichord, and made a bonfire of his furniture in the garden, kindling it with his manuscripts. I wrote at the time:—

“ ‘ But we do not regret the title of my book, do we, dear wife ? We have not lost our trust in the dear God,’ he said, bending his tall, slim figure to kiss the old lady’s hand.

“ ‘ No, indeed,’ she answered. ‘ We have lost our best china, but our guest will kindly excuse it.’ ”

With that touch of sweetness in my mind, I departed for Warsaw.

Whether to call the state of Poland at that time a tragedy or a comic-tragedy I do not know. As I wrote then, outside the discussions upon religious education in England, I had never found such an atmosphere of energetic pettiness and trivial virulence. It is in the nature of Poles to split into parties, and the parties grow in number, like polyps, by splitting again. From post-time to post-time one never knew how many parties there might be, or which member belonged to which. But about the middle of my stay, I classified them roughly as follows : (1) the Reactionaries, consisting entirely of Russian officials, representing the Russian “ garrison ” of 300,000 quartered among the 10,000,000 Poles in the country ; (2) the Realists, Conciliators, or Opportunists, gently feeling their way towards autonomy, and boasting intellectual powers, for which reason they were called a Staff without an army ; (3) the National Democrats, who were called an army without a Staff ; conscientious people, at one of whose meetings I watched some eighty elderly gentlemen practising how to vote under the guidance of a teacher who had studied the process in England, where it was in vogue, whereas in Poland it had been obsolete for nearly eighty years ; (4) the Progressive Democrats, an academic or doctrinaire party, who borrowed the title of “ Fabians ” from their corresponding group in London ; (5) the National or Polish Socialists, who boasted themselves practical people, but in reality were not to be distinguished from the last group except by their mutual detestation ; (6) the Social Democrats, proclaiming the gospel of St. Marx, narrow, bigoted, intolerant, and consequently powerful as elsewhere in Europe ; (7) the

Proletariat Socialists, regarding themselves as the true champions of the working man, whose share in the comforts of this life they were resolved to increase by any means, but by violence for choice ; and finally (8) the Bund or Jewish party, particularly strong in Warsaw, aiming at complete revolution by general strikes, assaults on Government buildings, and other forms of violent insurrection. They were continually trying to work upon the soldiers in the Russian army stationed in Poland, for they rightly discerned that a violent revolution was absurd unless the army could be induced not to fire upon the revolutionists. It was of their programme that, becoming almost prophetic as with a vision of March, 1917, I wrote at the time :

“Not to fire on citizens was the main thing, for if once that pledge could be imposed upon the Russian Army as a whole, the Government, with all its frippery and all its brutality, would vanish in a week.”

Like Christian sects, who do not differ very greatly, I suppose, in their ultimate purposes, the Polish parties, though aiming at the same object in the main, hated each other with a passionate intensity. As usual, the Social Democrats, imbibing the pure milk of the Socialistic faith, were the most vehement in their detestation of all the heretical creeds, but the mutual hatred of the other parties differed only in degree. They hated each other far more than they hated the common enemy, though all the time that enemy was shooting, hanging, and drowning the members of all parties with careless indifference to minor distinctions of belief. For the enemy had the enormous advantage of acting with uncomplicated decision, and of moving “on interior lines.” What his strategy and purpose were I soon discovered when, with suitable introductions, I called upon General Martynoff, Governor of Warsaw under General Skallon, who was Governor-General of Poland as a whole. He was a tall and shapely man, courteous and grave, well becoming the dignified furniture of his palace, and glancing

at me now and then with round, bright eyes, alert and watchful as a racoon's when you suddenly come upon him in the forest. In brief his statement ran :

"Martial law will be unflinchingly maintained. Poles are unreasonable, unpractical people, full of crazy notions. They need a strong hand, and they really like it. In his heart every Pole likes it. Ever since we crushed the Polish rebellion in 1864, order had reigned till last November, and now it reigns again."

I smiled inwardly, remembering how in 1864 "order reigned in Warsaw." He then divided the Poles into two parties only—the Socialists and the Nationalists. The Socialists talked the same nonsense everywhere, but when they began spreading their nonsense among the villages, the Government quartered troops throughout the country, and now the peasants had turned against Socialists, like all right-minded men. "The Jewish Bund is the only really troublesome Socialist body now left," he continued, "but we are dealing with them. They will tend to evanesce."

For the Nationalists he expressed equal contempt.

"They make a fuss," he said, "about the suppression of their language, but in Russia we must have only one language, and it must be Russian. They are fanatical about their Catholic religion. Their attachment to their superstitious rites is most extraordinary. Even the educated classes are little better than fanatics, incapable of any breadth of view, and if we gave the people a chance, they would insult and persecute the fellow-members of our Orthodox Church. That we shall never allow.

"Nor can we yield to their crazy talk about autonomy and separation. England can grant autonomy to her Colonies over sea. She does not grant it to Ireland, nor to India. We cannot become a powerless confederation like Austria, nor be always hampered by Socialists like Germany. Any kind of separation would ruin Poland and her industries by cutting off her only markets. First she would starve, then she would be swallowed up by Germany, and fools though the Poles are, they have sense enough to hate the Germans more than they hate us.

"In a weak moment our Government made concessions to Finland, and so the Poles were encouraged to hope for the same. But we cannot allow Finland to remain on a different footing from the rest of the Empire. The concessions must be withdrawn, and very likely we shall have to conquer Finland all over again. That will be an easy task and need cause no apprehension. All special rights within the Empire must vanish.

"Here in Poland we have to defend a frontier with no natural barrier against Germany. Even if we withdrew to the Vistula, that would not help us. If the Vistula were a mountain chain, it would be a different question, but in these days a river is no real protection. We must maintain our two parallel lines of fortresses in Poland, and especially the triangle of the three main strongholds, of which Warsaw is one. That triangle is too large to be surrounded, and it would secure us time for mobilization. For certainly we could not mobilize nearly so fast as Germany.

"People talk about Russia's internal troubles, but they are not of any importance. It is mainly an agrarian question. The peasants think their land insufficient because they are not educated enough to cultivate it properly, and the communal redistribution of lands every twelve years destroys the sense of ownership. We must institute private ownership in land, and plant a lot of new colonies, as in Siberia. Then you will see that Russia will regain her former quietude and prosperity. But if a Duma meets, it will be compelled to govern Poland exactly as the autocracy is governing her now."

I dwell upon the General's statement because it was a frank explanation of Russian policy as it appeared to an unusually thoughtful supporter of the Imperial idea. Also because it had some bearing upon the future course of Russia and of Europe in peace and war. But what interested me more than the General, and far more than the doctrines of the warring parties, was the state of the peasant, in whose interests both the General and the parties thought they were acting.

About 80 per cent of the Poles (i.e. over 8,000,000) were agriculturalists, and nearly half of these had no land but



wandered around as labourers, some 200,000 of them going yearly into East Prussia for the harvest. Some peasants were slowly buying land from the bankrupt old nobility, usually gamblers, and for generations past the chief cause of Poland's ruin. The peasants were paying from £5 to £6 an acre, and the ordinary holding was 17 acres. But the division of land probably lowered the standard, and, as the General said, the peasants were too ignorant to improve the cultivation. More than half of the whole population could not read or write, and in Warsaw alone were 60,000 children without places in the schools, while the ratio between the education grants of Poland and Germany was then as 6d. is to 9s. 7d.

Two other points I noticed as characteristic of Polish economics. First, Polish hides were sold at a price below their apparent value, because they were scarred by the cruelty with which Polish peasants use their heavy whips; and the same was true of Polish bacon, in which there was a large trade. The other point I discovered in a Consular Report, which observed that in Poland there was a large demand for antiquities—"family portraits, signet rings, blood-stained weapons, and so on"—and suggested that, though Germany had almost entirely ousted English trade from the country, an opening for Birmingham might here be found. It certainly seemed a needless sorrow that anyone who wanted a family portrait or a blood-stained weapon should remain without it, when Birmingham demanded new outlets for trade.

But besides the strong hint given by General Martynoff, I had received definite news about Finland and Russia's intentions from another equally trustworthy quarter, and when I reached London again, I set to work upon editors and my Liberal friends. They were powerful at that time because Campbell-Bannerman had just entered office after the sweeping Liberal victory of January, 1906. Accordingly, one day I was summoned to Downing Street by Vaughan Nash and Arthur Ponsonby, who were C.-B.'s

private secretaries, and they suggested, I believe on their own initiative, that I should go to Buckingham Palace and give my information to King Edward in person. Dress was my difficulty, for both assured me that the King was very particular about dress, and mine was never faultless. I thought it absurd of them to make such a fuss, for I had seen many a king in Central Africa more shabbily dressed and less sufficiently than I was then. But they insisted that, above all, I must wear a top-hat, and I had not worn one for over twenty years. What was to be done? Splendidly mendacious, Vaughan Nash detached his own top-hat from a peg, and we polished it up with a silk handkerchief till it almost shone. But as it was far too small for my head, I had to carry it in my hand until, coming within range of the sentries at the Palace gates, I made shift to jam it over my forehead lest they should think me insane. Having thus safely eluded their bayonets, I arrived at the front door and rang the electric bell. The door was opened by a paragon of princedom such as would delight a child in a fairy tale—thickly powdered hair, fine, impassive countenance, brilliant scarlet coat from neck to knee, a gleam of gold somewhere, perhaps on the waistcoat, exquisite primrose breeches, white silk stockings, and the daintiest shoes with shining buckles. Gulping down my astonished awe, and remembering that, like the Virgilian heroes, I had suffered things more dread, I asked, "Is the King at home, please?" and fixing his imperturbable eyes through my head upon a point far down the Mall, the glorified figure uttered the words, "His Majesty is expecting you, Sir," and I followed him through the royal portals.

Along passages and corridors we wended our way, catching glimpses of water-colours and drawings, evidently the labour of the Great White Queen's unassisted talent, and representing military scenes, such as "Our Review at Aldershot, 1845," wherein one beheld the verisimilitude of forgotten Generals and Staff officers, with long, pointed whiskers streaming over their shoulders in the wind, or decorously

hanging down to the centre of their tunics. But I had not time to make a careful artistic or historical survey, for I was noiselessly ushered into a comfortable sort of study, furnished with ordinary leather armchairs and writing-table. The gorgeous apparition withdrew, and through a hidden door in the opposite wall an equerry emerged in undress uniform with braid tabs down the front. To his questions I answered that the Tsar had commanded two Army Corps to mobilise on the frontiers of Finland for the invasion of the Duchy. The equerry listened attentively and ran back into the room behind the hidden door, whence I presently heard deep guttural sounds proceeding, mysterious and obscure as though an oracle spoke. Back came the equerry with more questions and back again he ran with my replies. After this to-and-fro method of communication between the Sovereign of the Empire and a mere journalist had been repeated a few times, the equerry stood still and said, "The King asks if you have anything further that you would wish to say," and I replied: "I should like to ask the King to write a personal letter to the Tsar warning him that if he wishes to conclude the proposed agreement with the English people, as I believe the King also desires, the invasion of Finland with two Russian army corps would be a bad beginning."

Away trotted the equerry, and again I heard the guttural notes of the voice that rocked the Empire. Back came the equerry, and said, "The King cannot make any such promise, as it would be interfering with the affairs of a friendly Power, but he thanks you for your information." I bowed, and, conducted by the gorgeous apparition, I retraced my steps until I emerged once again into the common air and could walk at ease back to Downing Street, where I restored the little top-hat to its owner and its peg. But for my duty as war correspondent in attendance upon George V for a day on one of his visits to the front in France during the Great War, that has been my only personal relation to British or European royalty, though, as before

described, I have consorted with African kings on more intimate terms. Of course, I do not know whether King Edward took any steps in consequence of my visit, but about a fortnight later I heard that the Russian Army Corps had been withdrawn from the Finnish frontier.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIRST DUMA

“ Shall tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,  
And freedom find no champion and no child ? ”

*Childe Harold : IV, 96.*

HAVING restored stability by a series of executions and imprisonments at that time unprecedented in civilised Europe, the Russian Government applied to civilised Europe for a loan to meet the deficit on the year's work—a deficit amounting to something between £80,000,000 and £90,000,000. Germany, holding about £140,000,000 of Russian stock already, refused further advance, chiefly because of Russia's service to France during the Algeciras Conference. France, already holding about £400,000,000 of Russian stock, advanced £46,000,000 more towards a new 5 per cent loan of £90,000,000 at 88. Austria advanced £6,600,000 ; Holland a little over £2,000,000 ; and England a little over £13,000,000, this being the first British loan given to Russia since the Crimean war, and marking, I think, the beginning of that Entente which led to unexpected and overwhelming results. For, as Schiller said, “ the world's history is the world's judgment.” Thus, as I wrote at the time, the Tsar's Government, having re-established its reputation by slaughter, held out a bloody hand to Europe, and Europe reverently kissed the bloody hand and filled it with gold.

Our Liberal Government under Campbell-Bannerman, still radiant with the hopefulness of youth, had no direct concern with the loan, that being a matter of private finance, and therefore below suspicion of conscience, so that my

little power of knowledge and statement had no effect upon it. But in close alliance with H. N. Brailsford, as so often, and encouraged by an interview with Mr. Herbert Gladstone, then Home Secretary, I perhaps did succeed in securing some mitigation in an Aliens Bill, which otherwise would have given the Russian Secret Police a fatal grip upon political refugees in this country. Much of my time in those months, and indeed for many years later, was thus occupied in endeavouring further to check the tendency towards a military and political understanding with Russia as a balance against Germany's growing trade and naval development. Nor was it only my natural horror at the Tsardom's bloodthirsty cruelty that prompted these vain but persistent endeavours. For I had already in these few months seen so much of official Russia's corruption and general incompetence that I could not attribute much value to her official assistance in any prolonged enterprise requiring patience and honest organisation. Even apart from the official classes, I had also found in the Russian nature a peculiar indifference to considerations of time and space ; and, when it comes to war, time and space are important elements.

Perhaps in hope of some relief from the pervading gloom of Russian affairs (how vain a hope !) I went one afternoon (April 26) alone to Terry's Theatre to see Maxim Gorki's play, "The Bezsemenoffs," upon which I find in my diary the following entry, of double interest :

"A fine satiric play of Russian family life—the whole family and the lodgers continually sitting down to tea, and fighting every time they sit down. The student and the son and daughter, with their boredom, and misery, and hatred of common, vulgar life, are excellent. The daughter attempts suicide, unhappily in vain, and so languishes on in love and disappointment. The mother, who tries to keep things smooth, and the well-meaning father with an uncontrolled temper, are admirable too. The bird-catcher is good, the intellectual vagabond rather a bore. The healthy engine-driver is fine in contrast, and the whole is certainly one of the best among our modern ironic plays.

"At the beginning, Thomas Hardy came creeping into the empty pit and sat beside me. He was in his usual mood, gentle, sensible, unpretentious. He thought the books appearing on Wessex might help to advertise his own books a little! He talked much of 'The Dynasts,' and mentioned the entire futility of American criticism, which always waits to see what English critics say before it dares express an opinion. He said that 'Tess' had sold best of his works, and the 'Madding Crowd' next best. For himself, he enjoyed concerts better than theatres, and thought Tchaikovsky's music had exactly the modern note of unrest. Best of all he liked to go to St. Paul's to hear the chanting, always choosing out his favourite chant according to the day's programme. Afterwards we went to a Lyons tea-shop, at which he was a little alarmed, being used only to an A.B.C., and unfortunately, as we came out, he caught sight of a broadsheet, announcing, 'Family Murdered with a Penknife.' He couldn't get over that. The vision of the penknife seemed to fascinate him. But we parted most amiably, the Strand quite unconscious of his greatness—unconscious as was Dido how powerful a god lay nestling in her lap."

On May 3, I started for Russia again, being asked to send letters about the meeting of the new Duma for the *Westminster Gazette*, at that time a judicious evening paper under its characteristic editor, Alfred Spender, who carefully guided public opinion along the narrow fence of balanced judgment, and was all the more influential owing to the presence of cognate minds, such as Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey, in the new Cabinet. On reaching St. Petersburg, I found reaction doing its utmost to impede the coming Duma. Old Goremykin, obsolete even for a Conservative, had just succeeded Witte as Prime Minister, with Stolypin, as Minister of Interior, and Isvolsky at the Foreign Office. Witte's legacy was a set of "New Fundamental Laws" composed for the Tsar's aid in holding the Duma in check, leaving the Tsar as "Autocrat" with the right to veto, the appointment of the Executive, and the control of nearly all finance.

For its birthplace Trepoff chose the Coronation Hall in

the Winter Palace, columned with marble, and decorated with the gold and crimson hideousness to which emperors and kings are obliged to grow accustomed. At the end of the hall, upon a few steps, stood a gilded throne, over which was thrown a robe of ermine and yellow silk in studied negligence. At the four corners round the throne were placed little gilded camp-stools, on which, in my ignorance, I supposed the four little princesses (poor girls !) were to sit. But I was wrong ; the stools were reserved for the crown, the sceptre, the great seal, and the orb, glittering with many diamonds, since dispersed, who knows to what quarters of the world, or in what insinuating sweetmeats conveyed ? In front stood a praying-desk and table, covered with cloth of gold, supporting the miraculous ikon of Christ's head, brought from the old palace of Peter the Great and so dusty that the attendant priests had to spend some labour in polishing it clean. A large choir of men and boys, in cassocks of crimson and gold to match the furniture, was drawn up behind.

On the right of the throne, the Council of Empire ranged themselves, with Senators bright as tulips, Ministers planted with flowers and foliage of gold lace down their coats, a whole " school " of Admirals (if one may borrow the marine phrase for porpoises), Field-Marshal and Generals radiant in gold and silver, and the Holy Synod in all the panoply of holiness. On the breasts of the uniforms, stars, crosses, and medals gleamed and rattled so thick that one could only hope the heroes would not live to deserve more decorations, for which there would be no room, so amazing had been the courage or wisdom of every heart. Presently the members of the newly-elected Duma came trooping in, and took their stand on the left—sturdy peasants for the most part, variegated by a Catholic Bishop, some Tartar Mullahs, a Balkan peasant, four monks, and a few gentlemen in evening dress. So the two crowded lines stood facing each other ; on one side the nobility and officials, pale, bald, fat, like a



representatives of the people—young, alert, and sunburnt, with brown and hairy heads, dressed like ordinary mankind, and straining for the future chance.

A sudden hush fell upon them all when far away was heard the sound of the melancholy Russian Hymn slowly approaching. Escorted by golden staves, the flag of Empire, and a big gilt sword, those majestic toys of kings above mentioned were borne in upon velvet cushions, and placed upon the gilded camp-stools around the throne. Close behind his toys, the little Tsar was seen advancing, dressed in a dark blue field-uniform, pleasing in simplicity. He was an amiable-looking gentleman, singularly like our George V in appearance, but he walked with a characteristic, timid swagger, till he encountered the aged Metropolitan, who stood in wait for him with a holy kiss and a sprinkling from green herbs dipped in consecrated water. His mother and his wife followed close behind, but received only the holy kiss, without the sprinkling. Twelve feet behind them their trains extended, flat upon the ground; and at a safe distance behind the trains, the Grand Dukes halted in triple rows of repeated splendour.

In tones like the Voice of the Lord that shaketh the cedars, the priests chanted and called and read the Golden Book, while the choir responded with musical wailings. Surpassing even the bishops in sanctimonious usage, the Grand Dukes and courtiers bowed and crossed themselves with a religious zeal rare among men of their quality. On the left a few peasants crossed themselves from habit, but the stiff-necked generation of deputies as a whole remained unmoved, polite spectators of these curious survivals. The service ceased, the priests and Empresses stood aside, and, summoning up all the initiative in his nature, the Tsar slowly mounted the steps, faced round to the assembly, and sat down upon the negligent ermine robe. A decorated official handed him a parchment scroll, and he stood up to read. Destiny had granted the little man another great opportunity, and again

faded, and as commonplace succeeded commonplace, amid the customary appeals to God, and the expression of such affection as monarchs, with unaccustomed agreement, invariably feel for their subjects, it was realised that no concession was made, no conciliation attempted. When the end came, and the banners waved, and the band played, and the aristocrats and officials shouted "Hurrah!" the members of the Duma stood silent.<sup>1</sup>

I followed the Deputies to the Taurída Palace, a beautiful eighteenth-century building, designed by Catherine II as a present for Potemkin, her redoubtable lover, and on my way I could see the political prisoners waving handkerchiefs or towels from the barred windows of the Cross prison, and at the door of the Duma I heard the air resounding with shouts of "Amnesty!" and "Freedom!" But the Tsar had not the grace to concede amnesty to the thousands of prisoners held in torment or monotony because their political views did not coincide with his, and the first gleam of freedom was soon to be overcast.

It was that cry for amnesty that first broke the short-lived harmony between the Tsar and his beloved people. When Muromtzeff, dignified member for Moscow and once Professor of Law there, had been elected President of the Duma by 426 votes to 3, old Petrunkevitch, leader of such Reformers as were not Socialists, was put up to make the first speech in a Russian Parliament, and inevitably he chose amnesty as his subject. A day or two later, Róditcheff, his colleague from Tver, and also one of the Reformers, or

<sup>1</sup> In view of subsequent history, some sentences of the Tsar's Address are of pathetic interest. After stating that Divine Providence had laid on him the care of the Fatherland, and had moved him to summon representatives of the people to assist in the work of legislation—"a difficult and complicated task"—the Tsar proceeded: "I with unwavering firmness will uphold the institutions which I have established, in the firm conviction that you will devote all your powers to the self-sacrificing service of the country, to a clear presentation of the needs of the peasants, which lie so close to my heart, to the enlightenment of the people, and the development of their wellbeing. You must realise that for the true welfare of the State, not only Liberty is necessary, but also Order on the basis of Law."

"Girondins," of the Revolution, spoke to the same demand, and was followed by Aníkin, a peasant leader from Sarátóff. When the question was put that the demand for amnesty—"release of the 75,000 politicals"—be included in the address to the Tsar, with one great shout the whole assembly rose in confirmation. The Address also included demands for a Ministry responsible to the Duma, the abolition of the State Council, the right of Habeas Corpus, freedom of speech, meeting, and association, and the abolition of capital punishment. But the Tsar refused even to receive it from the hands of the Duma's President, rejected all its proposals, and sent old Goremykin to explain to the Duma the two main counter-proposals of the Government, the more important being a grant of money for building a new wash-house at Dorpat University.

Soon after this example of paternal legislation, I was obliged to return to London, but for two months more the First Duma continued its struggle, demanding a Civil Liberties Act and a wide Agrarian Reform. They further demanded investigation into an atrocious torture-chamber discovered at Riga, and into a furious massacre perpetrated at Bielostok, and deliberately instigated by the Ministry of the Interior, as was revealed by Prince Urúsoff, who while Under-Secretary of the Interior had heard an official in charge of the secret printing presses declare, "I can organise a pogrom anywhere you please, and for 10 or 10,000 victims, just as you like." But it was on the Agrarian question that the Tsar chose to take action. He dissolved the Duma by *ukase* on July 21, ten weeks and two days after its assembly, and appointed Stolýpin to succeed Goremykin as Prime Minister. So the unhappy men, Tsar and Prime Minister, took one further step towards the fate awaiting both.

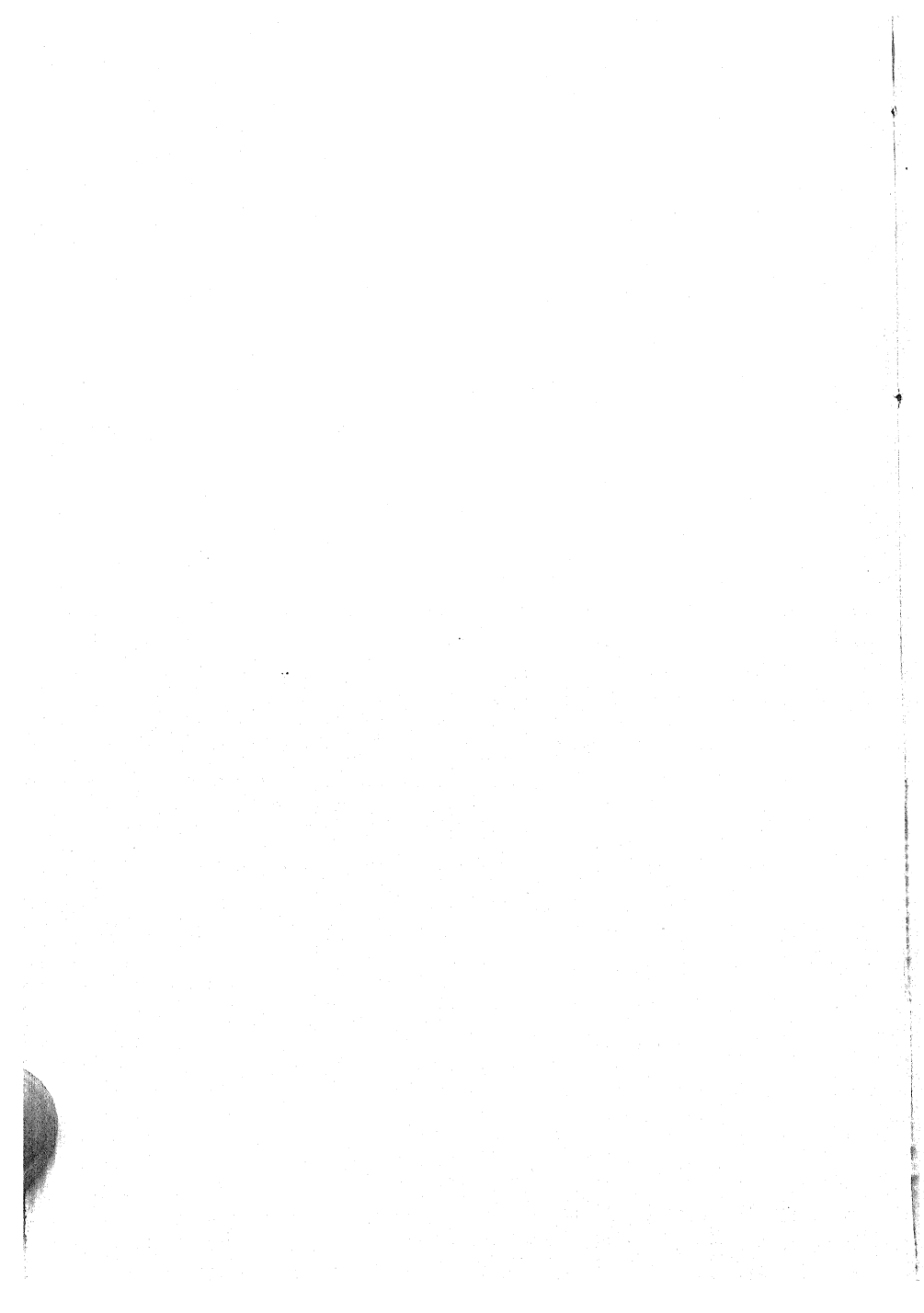
The dissolution of the Duma was the occasion of a small but peculiar coincidence in my own case. After my return to London, I had done my utmost by writing leaders and letters in the Liberal papers to discourage the British

Government's intention of sending the Fleet to Kronstadt on a complimentary voyage. Many similar protests appeared, and these were strongly supported by Russian Liberals, who regarded the visit as likely to bolster up the autocracy, especially on the financial side. On the other hand, Sir Edward Grey, speaking as Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons (July 5), maintained that the visit must be carried through, but that it was intended to promote a good understanding with the whole Russian people, and not merely as a compliment to the Court. It was with all the greater satisfaction that on July 14 we heard that the Fleet's visit had been abandoned in accordance with the express wish of the Russian Government itself. No precise reason was given, but we were perhaps right in attributing the happy result to our opposition, of which the Russian Court was certainly aware. So it was natural that when the news of the Duma's dissolution reached us, Robert Donald should ask me to write the leader upon it in the *Daily Chronicle*. At the end of the leader I wrote in italics, "*La Duma est morte ! Vive la Duma !*" but when the proof came down for correction, I looked at the words once or twice, and then crossed them out as being rather commonplace and obvious.

It so happened that the very next morning, representatives from the Parliaments of the world were gathered in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords for an International Peace Conference, to which Russia had sent six deputies on behalf of the youngest of Parliaments. The whole place buzzed with the news that had just appeared in the morning papers. Speaking in French, Lord Weardale addressed a welcome to the whole body of delegates, and there was a murmur of applause at the end of every sentence. But a sense of expectation and excitement still hung over the crowded audience, till at last the wished-for moment came : "And especially," said our President with marked emphasis, "especially I desire to welcome among us those representatives who have come to speak on behalf of the Russian Duma." We heard no more.



MAXIM KOVALEVSKY  
LEADING DUMA DELEGATE TO LONDON  
*A Cartoon of 1905*



The whole assembly rose to its feet, waving hats and shouting, “Bravo!” “Duma! Duma!” The six Russians stood in line, bowing again and again. There they stood before us for that great moment in Westminster—leaders of Russia’s endeavour to free herself from ancient tyranny. They bowed and smiled, but in what whirlpool of subsequent history they have since been submerged I do not know.

Lord Weardale then called upon the Prime Minister, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman came quietly forward, looking round upon the enthusiastic audience with his characteristic mixture of easy-going benevolence and shrewd good-sense. He read from carefully prepared notes written in French, and after some general remarks on peace and the progress of arbitration, he came to the subject of our excitement :

“I cannot refrain from saying for myself,” he said, “and I am sure for everyone in this great and historic assembly, how glad we are to welcome among us the representatives of the youngest of Parliaments—the Russian Duma.”

After a tactful reference to the services of the Tsar in convening the first Hague Conference on Peace, he continued :

“I make no comment on the news which has reached us this morning. This is neither the place nor the moment for such comment. It is not for us either to praise or to blame. We have not a sufficient acquaintance with the facts to be in a position to justify or criticise. But this at least we can say to those who base their hopes and confidence on the Parliamentary system: new institutions often have a disturbed if not a stormy youth. In one form or another, the Duma will revive. The Duma is dead! Long live the Duma!”

As he uttered those words, “*La Duma est morte! Vive la Duma!*” the memory of my action of a few hours before in cutting them out from the last line of my leader in the *Chronicle* office came to me. Why had I done it? The words were now obviously in their right place. They were

received with inexpressible rapture by that vast and excited audience. They echoed round the world. They gave the Prime Minister a new reputation for courage as the champion of freedom, though he had already shown courage in an unpopular cause. They raised a Peace Conference to historic dignity. The advocates of reaction called them outrageous. The supporters of the Russian *Entente* abandoned hope. The "King's Friends" rebuked them as disloyal. But the hearts of all who had fought for freedom and peace leapt for joy. If I had let the words stand at the end of my article, who would have noticed them? They would have been taken as read, and, what would have been far worse, if the Prime Minister's private secretary had seen them, he would probably have advised the Prime Minister to avoid their repetition. If ever there was a case of providential and plenary inspiration, it breathed upon my pen when I scratched them out. For it is not the thing said that counts, but the person who says it. And one man may steal a horse, while another may not look over the hedge.

That summer of 1906 was a strangely unhappy time for me, partly because of this Russian question and the well-founded fear that, no matter how firmly Campbell-Bannerman and some of his Cabinet might stand against it, a political and military agreement with the Tsar's Government was being surreptitiously promoted by sinister influences above them and below. Lewis Hind remarked to me at that time that Bishop Ingram of London came to the boil every Thursday so as to enforce his weekly denunciation of vice. But the threatened *Entente* with the Tsar brought me to the boil every morning, which was six times worse. I had personal reasons for unhappiness too. The leavings of Africa kept me in perpetual torment night and day, for I still hoped for a remedy and had not then acquiesced in suffering incurable. Besides, my livelihood was very uncertain, though I still wrote frequent leaders for the *Chronicle*. I had no regular Staff position, and the *Tribune*, which had promised golden joys, was already on the slope to



perdition. My expenses for my daughter's excellent musical education, and for my son's continuance in ignorance at a great public school were heavy, and the future of both was dubious. But, on looking back, I can now see that I had not much reason for despair, except my haunting shyness and self-distrust. The work that came to me unasked in those months was sufficient both in variety and amount, though the pay did not tempt to avarice. I was sent by the *Chronicle* to investigate the evil rumours about conditions in the Potteries; and afterwards to describe the Naval Manœuvres of the year. Then Alfred Spender, of the *Westminster*, asked me to write a series of articles on religious instruction in the Board Schools and Church Schools of London. These varied tasks I performed, and much besides, so that it is hard now to understand why I was perpetually oppressed with a sense of failure, futility, and dreary inaction.

As to lead-poisoning in the Potteries, I was told both by workers and managers that it had become far less frequent and less deadly since Vaughan Nash and Mrs. Nash had exposed the full horror of it some years before, also in the *Chronicle*. But there were a good many cases none the less, the most remarkable being a middle-aged woman, who told me she had been nearly dead of the poison, but pregnancy saved her, the baby being born black and so carrying off most of the lead. The manager at one of the big works said he had tried many experiments in leadless glaze, but always found that the orders from the large shops fell off, for buyers insisted upon having the shiny, poisonous stuff, and there was no help for it. By care and washing the danger of lead could be reduced, but it seemed to me the women who scoured the flint dust off the china after firing suffered most, all the more because they ate their lunch from little paper packets, thickly strewn with particles of flint. The girls in the works began at about 1s., and rose to 12s. or 14s. a week, a very experienced woman rising to 27s. A good workman made from 30s. to 39s., and the rent for a house, in the

monotonous little rows of houses that run all over the Potteries, came to something between 4s. 6d. and 6s. 6d. a week. Babies were put out to nurse under a month old, so that the mothers might return to work and balance the family budget. But I need not say more, for since I was there, Arnold Bennett's genius has created the Five Towns anew, filling even the Potteries with a personal interest of almost romantic association.

Hardly had I returned and faced the customary abusive shrieks of vested interests, whether political or capitalist, when Robert Donald sent me off for the comparative peace of the Naval Manœuvres, ranging that year between the south-west of Ireland and the Portuguese coast. Two fleets, under those truly British seamen, Admirals May and Wilson ("Tug" Wilson, a name how exquisitely exact!) were supposed to be acting against each other, and I think that May's fleet, which I was ordered to accompany, got the worst of it. At all events, our ships had to run for their lives back to the English coast, spraying oil on the furnaces all the way—a new experiment then—and I headed my account, "A Fleet in Fleeing." But that did not matter much at the time, and does not matter at all now. To me the interest lay in the glimpse of life on board a battleship, which I had never seen before, though I have known something of it since in the Dardanelles. I was appointed to the "Hindustan," one of the "King Edward" class, which Arnold White had proudly described to me as "the greatest man-killing instrument the world had ever seen!"; and I daresay that was true at the time, for the conception of a "Dreadnought" fleet was still young. We had five of the class with us, including the "King Edward," and no doubt they formed a very powerful body of destruction. But to me, as a mere layman, the "Hindustan" seemed to have one conspicuous fault. It was noted that, soon after we had put out from Berehaven, we were easily passed by a liner—a German liner! I suppose a liner will always pass a battleship. But the ship, and I think the whole class, plunged

head first into every big wave, and seemed to wallow through the water rather than float. She reminded me of Christopher Smart's lines :

“ Strong against tide th' enormous whale  
Emerges as he goes.”

Such going and emerging are all very well for an oily whale, but for the “ Hindustan ” the result was that the fore part of the ship was perpetually wet, and almost half the time under water, so that the seamen's quarters in the fo'c'sle were cold, damp, and unwholesome. But the stokers could not complain of cold during their four-hours' shifts. I discovered that by staying among them while they worked in a temperature of 120° up to 150°, some throwing on coal, some spraying oil on the fires to produce intense heat, driving the ship at 17½ or 18 knots an hour, with 112 revolutions a minute, and for their regular work they got 2s. a day (the common seamen getting 1s., and the A.B. seaman 1s. 8d.). But on this occasion, owing to the extreme speed which we had to keep across the Bay and up to Scarborough, the stokers got 2s. 6d. extra at the end—2s. 6d. and a smile from Captain Colville himself. From Captain Colville I learnt much, though he had nothing but my pure ignorance to go upon. And I learnt much too from Archibald Hurd, naval expert to the *Daily Telegraph*, and of naval experts one of the very wisest.

My next task ran on different lines. For some years before that time, I had heard people talking a strange jargon about “ non-provided,” “ extended facilities,” “ *ad hoc*,” “ four-fifths,” “ Cowper-Temple,” and other unintelligible formulæ concerned with the teaching of religion in the primary schools. I had no personal interest in those embittered disputes, at that time chiefly raging over Mr. Augustine Birrell's Bill. For I regarded all forms of religion with about equal admiration, though perhaps admiring Catholicism most on account of its beautiful symbolism and æsthetic charm. I suppose this complete “ detachment ” was Spender's reason for asking me to visit the schools and

write on the various methods of religious instruction. In the Board Schools I found the best teachers in great perplexity about the Old Testament. How could educated men or women in this century tell children to believe that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day? What moral lessons could they draw from Joshua's massacres in the Holy Land, or from the case of Achan, whose sons and daughters and cattle were stoned or burnt together with him (Joshua VII)? Or from the behaviour of Abraham, Jacob, and Samuel? How counteract the instances of hideous cruelty approved by early Hebrew religion, and held up as examples for our children to follow? To most children, as to myself when a child, the Old Testament is the only interesting part of the Bible, and, happily, the words are so familiar that their real meaning either slides off the mind, or is put away in a separate compartment as being "religious," and so having no concern with daily life. Their assumed sanctity preserves the Jewish histories from doing much harm; otherwise it would be impossible to regard the Old Testament historic books as fit subjects for children's education at all. But teachers who have realised their true significance suffer from the obligation of teaching them as inspired and exemplary, and many uttered their protests to me after the lesson was over. But Catholic teachers, whether Roman or Anglican, appeared to be relieved of these perplexities. And in one High Anglican school (in London Docks) I found the priest himself giving instruction in the church. If school buildings are cramped as well as hideous in our towns and villages, would it not be well to teach all subjects in the churches, chapels, or synagogues every day? For this would imply no profanity, since all education is, I suppose, a worship of the Holy Spirit.

But one thing during these visits to the schools struck me even more than doubts as to religious teaching. I had known the teachers in our primary schools fairly well, for I met many when I was living close to Toynbee Hall,

and I was a School Manager in those parts. My astonishment at their excellence was now only increased. They were poorly paid. After a year or two, teaching becomes monotonous and depressing ; it is generally irritating ; but any moment of bad temper, any lapse from a rigid standard of behaviour, meant ruin. Personal encouragement, praise, or sympathy from higher authorities was rare. Yet the teachers toiled on from year to year, devoted to their work, often enthusiastic, nearly always well-mannered and kindly. Of all their high qualities what surprised me most was their personal knowledge of the children—their acquaintance with the nature, and often with the family history of each. They had none of the out-of-school opportunities for this personal knowledge which our public-school masters possess and sometimes use. Yet they were aware of the difference between one child and another among the fifty or sixty before them. For true instruction they were ultimately beaten by numbers, but their effort was magnificent.

Another point, closely connected with this, was the general feeling of pleasure in the school, and the keen interest taken in the lessons. There was no competition, no taking of places, no prizes, no marks. Neither was there any punishment that a public-school boy would count. Yet the eagerness to answer each question was intense. Up went the hands, tremulous with excitement. Some of the children could hardly keep their places, some appealed for the teacher's notice under their breath. I remember one little girl who quivered from head to foot in her desire to impart her knowledge. She waved her whole arm ; she longed to spring on the desk. I could hear her gasping whisper, " Oh, teacher, teacher, please, teacher, please ! " Whenever she got her chance, her answer was invariably wrong, but that did not matter. After a moment's disappointment she was up again, bursting with eagerness, waving her thin arm, longing to jump upon the desk and disclose her next mistake. To poor children the school is what its name originally meant—a place of leisure and even

of pleasure. In it they feel comfortable, clean, warm or cool, interested and kindly treated. To a public-school boy the alternative to being in school is playing in a field or rowing on a river. To the working man's child the alternative is working in a slum or sitting in a gutter. There was something pathetic in the answer of one child who, when asked what a forest was like, eagerly replied, "St. John's Wood!"

In this summer (1906) I met many notable people, such as Kamel Pasha, the Egyptian patriot, a man of superfine manners and charming address; Felix Cobbold, with whom I stayed at Felixstowe, where he took me on his sailing yacht (which he boasted cost him only £400 a year!); Frederic Mackarness, to whom Cobbold introduced me, and who afterwards became one of my best friends; for indeed he had a natural inclination to the finest and most unpopular causes and peoples, such as the Boers and the Irish, to whom his inclination was all the stronger because he was married to an exquisite type of Irish womanhood. So too with the Indians, whose cause brought him into violent contact with Lord Morley, who at the India Office, when receiving him with others on a deputation, began by saying, "I may call all of you gentlemen my friends, except that man!" shaking his fist at Mackarness in real anger. And indeed that Indian question made him so unpopular that he lost all his practice at the Bar and was forced to give up politics and accept a County Court Judgeship in sheer poverty, being, I suppose, really the most "righteous" man I have known, except perhaps Lord Courtney. For both lived on the model of Aristeides, and with similar result. And I met Volkhovsky, the benign revolutionist in exile, and Tchaykovsky, the veteran revolutionist and co-operator, founder of the famous Tchaykovsky Circle of St. Petersburg in the 'seventies, but then living retired at Harrow. And William Henry Davies, the model tramp and most delicate of modern poets, to whom Edward Thomas, tramp, poet, and essayist, introduced me in the Weald of Kent.<sup>1</sup> But certainly the most notable event

<sup>1</sup> For the beginning of my long friendship with Edward Thomas, see "Changes and Chances," pp. 195, 196.

in the way of contact with genius that year was an invitation from Thomas Hardy to stay with him at Max Gate, near Dorchester, because I had been asked to write something about his works and himself. I wrote the essay, and as he sent me a letter expressing great pleasure and approval of it, I may quote a few sentences from the notes on which it was founded.<sup>1</sup> For if a man of genius like Socrates, Johnson, Goethe, or Hardy, does not wish his conversation to be quoted, he should cease being a man of genius, since nothing else will save him.

“Hardy came out of his study to tea, and we talked chiefly on Russia, till we set out for the old home of the Dorset poet Barnes, a beautiful cottage home, and then through Crane Park to Barnes’s old church and Celtic gravestone. He told me how Louis Napoleon used to visit at the Park, and nearly married one of the girls there, which would certainly have altered European history. He talked freely about the characters in his books, how he thought people in the country were becoming more like them rather than less. The half-educated girl especially, he said, was growing like Tess or Sue (he thought ‘Jude’ his greatest prose book, perhaps because it was his last?). Many girls of the same type wrote to him—small teachers, musicians, etc., some asking how they could get back to live in the country. He spoke a good deal about sport, how he had really induced one sportsman not to go out shooting one day; and he described the indignation of the neighbouring land-owners because he had described *their* pheasant plantations in ‘Tess,’ after which they had long refused to call on him. He showed me in the distance the monument to Nelson’s Hardy, and later, in the church, a tablet to a Thomas Hardy of Elizabeth’s reign. The family came from Jersey, and his own grandfather used to sail to Ireland, and brought back an Irish wife.

“He spoke with some bitterness of an eminent critic who had said Hardy’s books would not live because they had no moral principle; and he complained that the critic had not attempted to show that there *was* such a thing as a moral principle. He thought badly of the ‘Oxford Book of

<sup>1</sup> For this essay in abbreviated form, see “Essays in Freedom”—“A Son of Earth.”

Verse' for its love of tags and morals in the mid-Victorian manner. The poet Barnes, he thought, had the same fault, and his poems were generally better if the last verse were omitted. He pointed out the beginning of Egdon Heath, and many other places. He considered the foundation of Ruskin College in Oxford was due to 'Jude,' and said the Oxford dons used to be very angry about the book, but had now got over it. People were always very stupid in taking dramatic sentences as representing his own opinions. He had ceased to care much about his prose books, and would have written nothing but verse, if he could have afforded it (which suggested to me another of the sweet uses of adversity). When a lyric was done, he said, it was something produced (which reminded me of Goethe's sneer about the dilettante poets who thought they really had accomplished something definite when they could show a verse for their pains). One is never certain about prose, he said, but you could get the whole of a novel into three pages of verse. Later on he often returned to his love of verse. He was much occupied with 'The Dynasts,' and defended his way of turning Parliamentary debates into verse when the argument was high, as in one of Pitt's last speeches. He thought neither side could ever be right in those big controversies, but the English were on the whole less wrong than Napoleon. So on Home Rule he was never very enthusiastic, but thought the Irish should have made the utmost of the English alliance so as to enrich their women and children. Upon that point we rather fell out.

"Next morning we walked into Dorchester, and he showed me the shop that had been kept by the father of Treves, the great surgeon, and the house where Judge Jeffreys lived during the Bloody Assize. Also the road to the village, three miles out, where he himself was born. Then we cycled along the Weymouth road to the top of the Ridgeway, and walked out to the left to a farm beside a plantation, giving a splendid view over Weymouth and Portland, and far inland to nearly all the places mentioned in his books. The Start and St. Alban's Head were both just visible. Kipling had been much pleased with the place, and wanted to build there, and when Hardy told him all his windows would be shaken by the big guns firing off Portland, he said that would especially delight him. Hardy said he liked Kipling very much as a companion, and thought he would



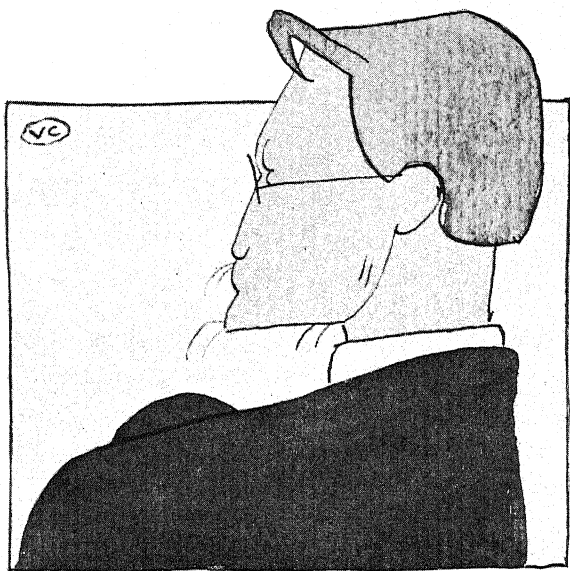
have been a very great writer if the Imperialists had not got hold of him. He also showed me the point on the road to which the soldiers had come when they heard that the rumour of Napoleon's landing was false. In the town he showed me the railings he used to climb up as a boy to watch the hangman having his tea in a cottage room below on the evening before an execution, and how strange it seemed to him that the man could eat anything at such a time. We also went into the Roman amphitheatre just south of the station where a woman was burnt alive not very long ago on suspicion of having poisoned her husband. She had a lover, and they waited for six months till her baby was born, and then they burnt her alive in the middle of the grassy amphitheatre.<sup>1</sup> On an old plan of Dorchester, Hardy also pointed me out the hardly distinguishable spot where the gallows were marked. These subjects have for him a horrible fascination that comes of extreme sensitiveness to other people's pain. I suppose that if we all had that intensity of imagination we should never do harm to any human being or animal or bird, certainly not in cruelty."

But all the time the Russian reaction was raging. Miliukoff was in London. We admirers gave him a dinner, and I saw much of him, but whether our next step came from his encouragement or suggestion I am not certain. The idea was to send out a deputation of various Liberals conveying a Manifesto of sympathy and admiration signed by 120 members of Parliament and a few others to the disbanded Duma and their President, Muromtzeff. "All went well," as the papers say of a train on its way before the accident, until news came that the Black Hundred were preparing to meet this innocent deputation on the frontier with violence and sudden death. They even specified the horrors awaiting us, for we were to be torn limb from limb the moment we set foot on Russian soil. On hearing of our proposal, all the reactionary papers in London went equally rabid. The *Times* and the *Morning Post* raged against these "fools" and "busybodies." The *Daily Mail* telegraphed to its

<sup>1</sup> Hardy soon after published in the *Times* a long account of this trial and atrocious execution, but I have forgotten the exact date.

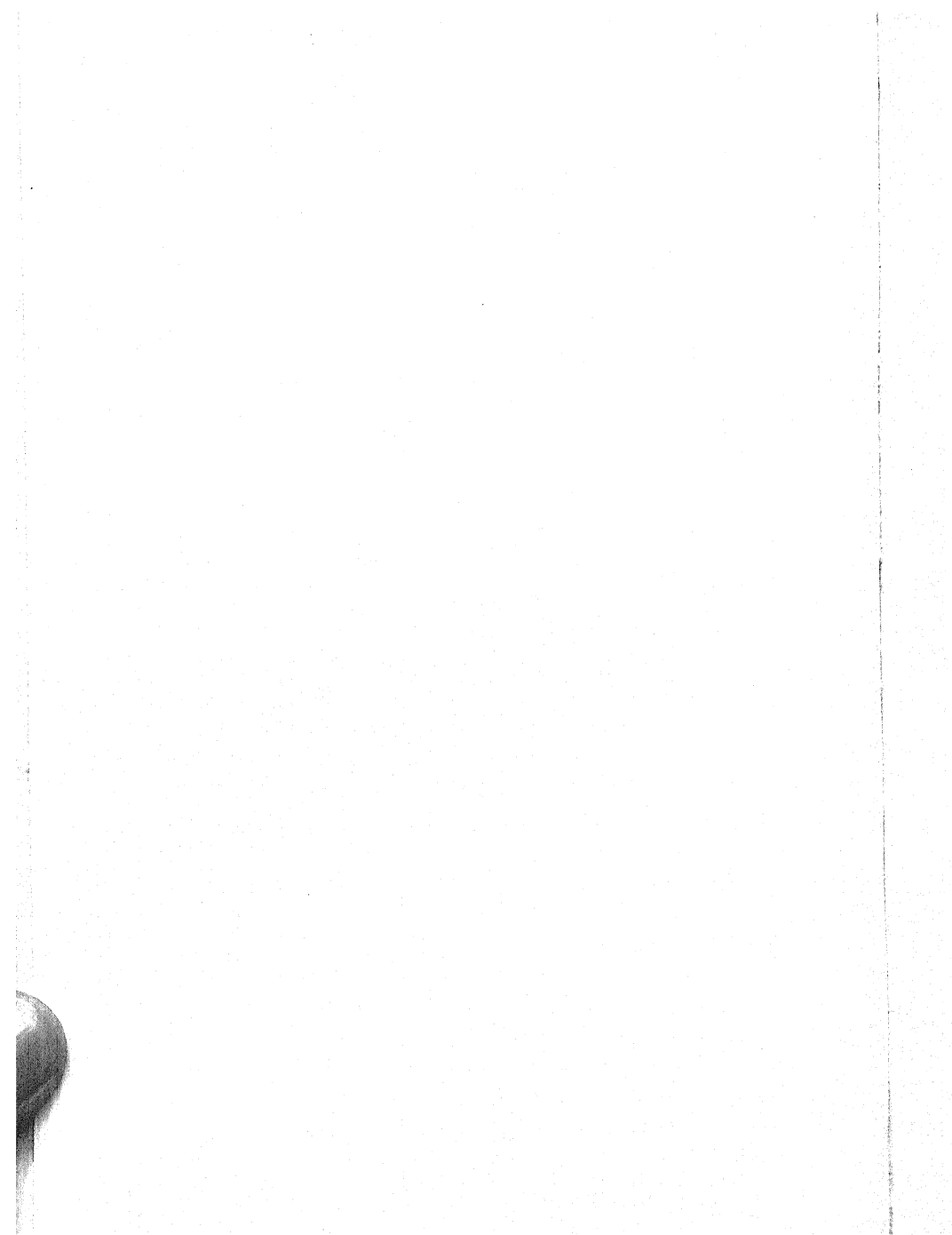
correspondent in St. Petersburg to watch us from the frontier and pour scorn and ridicule on us at every step—a brief and easy task if we had been torn limb from limb. Sir Edward Grey silently disapproved. Spender, who spoke for him in the *Westminster*, urged the beauty of caution and the charm of golden mediocrity. He was kind enough to say that we were all such notably brave men, that if we turned back no one could accuse us of cowardice. Certainly there were some on our little committee whom no one could accuse, for Sir George Scott Robertson, one of the heroes of Chitral, was with us. Yet even he began to hesitate, and so did others of great place and standing. Brailsford and Pethick Lawrence almost alone stood out, urging that even a relic or rump of the party should go, but Brailsford could not obtain a passport for himself. At last, rather than have the proposal fizzle out altogether, I suggested that I should carry the document alone, as I happened to be going to Russia for the *Chronicle* and *Harper's Monthly* in any case, hoping to visit the disturbed regions in the Caucasus. And this was agreed to. Perhaps the committee could do nothing more decisive, but still I wish we had tried to go as a party, if only to defy the London papers. For it is very probable that we should not have been torn limb from limb, and if we had been, our fate might have averted that agreement with the Tsardom which gave Germany the excuse of fear—fear of “encirclement” on east, west, and the sea. It might even have averted the Great War itself, and by our scattered limbs many millions of lives might have been saved, and the world spared its present load of incalculable misery.

For myself, I kept my own limbs together by two very simple devices that would have deceived no one but simple-minded Russians. Instead of travelling to the frontier where the loyal Tsarists were awaiting me with hatchets, saws, and other implements of butchery, I went by Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Helsingfors, whence I sailed quietly up to the St. Petersburg landing-stage, and passed through the lines of officials without a word said or a



PROFESSOR MILIUKOFF

*A Cartoon of 1905*



limb shed. As a second precaution I had stuffed the perilous parchment under my shirt, without appearing any fatter than a bourgeois citizen of middle age usually is.

As I carried secret dispatches from our crippled Consul Cooke of Helsingfors, I called at once at the British Embassy in St. Petersburg, and had a long conversation with Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock), famous Ambassador and Foreign Office guide, who had known most of this world and was then to stay in St. Petersburg four fateful years longer.<sup>1</sup> He appeared to me as a smallish, stooping, rather lame, blue-eyed man, with reddish hair; polite, grave, and expressing ignorance in the Oxford manner. He had evidently heard a good deal about my coming, and said he was relieved that the deputation had remained at home, because he feared insults to all the English. I am not sure whether I showed him the Manifesto still reposing on my bosom, but probably I let it repose. He took a quiet and official view of the whole situation, putting much confidence in Stolýpin's honesty and good intentions; but it was not hard to detect his purpose in furthering that Russian agreement against which our Liberal efforts were mainly directed. A few days later, I was invited to lunch by O'Byrne, who was attached to the Embassy, and found him a delightful and interesting companion, though I did not then understand his real skill as a diplomatist, any more than I foresaw his fate by drowning side by side with Kitchener, a double and almost equal loss.

As to the treasured document itself, I was entertained once to a three-hours' tea (with champagne), and once to a prolonged dinner, at both of which festivities, in Russian fashion, speeches began with the tea or soup, and so continued. Muromtseff spoke, grave, stern, inclined to silence; Miliukoff spoke, cheerful, smiling, voluble, and full of hope; I spoke, badly in French, rather better in German, rather better in English, but, as usual, not remarkably well. Less well perhaps even than usual because all the time I was

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carnock died in 1924.

conscious of Brailsford's comparison of me to Anacharsis Clootz, "*Speaker of Mankind.*" when he came, "with the Human Species at his heels," to congratulate the National Assembly in Paris (June, 1790). All the time I kept recalling that laughing passage :

" ' Our Ambassador titles,' said the fervid Clootz, ' are not written on parchment, but on the living hearts of all men.' These whiskered Polacks, long-flowing turbaned Ishmaelites, astrological Chaldeans, who stand so mute here, let them plead with you, august Senators, more eloquently than eloquence could. . . . We claim to stand there, as mute monuments, pathetically adumbrative of much . . . A long-flowing Turk bows with Eastern solemnity, and utters articulate sounds : but owing to his imperfect knowledge of the French dialect, his words are like spilt water ; the thought he had in him remains conjectural to this day."<sup>1</sup>

At the dinner the document was formally presented, and duly disappeared into space. I read afterwards in one of Stephen Graham's lusciously attractive books on the religious enthusiasm and Arcadian virtues of the Russian peasant that Muromtseff and some other members of the first Duma were rather hurt that so important a Manifesto should have been remitted by the hands of "a mere journalist" (Graham's words). And indeed I was aware of my inadequacy. I had persistently urged that people with limbs of higher value than mine should be sent. But the whole weight of the Foreign Office and the *Times*, the *Morning Post*, and even the *Westminster Gazette* was opposed to any such extravagance.

Passing on to Moscow again, I was kindly received by an English merchant family which had lived so many generations in Russia that their manner of pronouncing English made it scarcely comprehensible. One of them, being a philanthropist on the old and easy lines, took me to see

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's "French Revolution," Vol. II, p. 44. It may be thought I was more like the Turk than like Anacharsis, but compare the description of Anacharsis. Vol. II. p. 20.

"how the poor lived," and in all my goings to and fro upon the earth I have never seen mankind reduced to conditions so hideous. To call them brutish or bestial would be a libel on all animals. In one high loft I found the workmen crowded into compartments called "free lodgings." Nineteen or twenty went to each compartment, and the beds were slabs of wood or iron, slightly sloping, and divided by a low partition down the middle, so that each slab might accommodate two sleepers. Such lofts were not exactly luxurious, but they were paradise compared with the cellars, sometimes two stories below ground and absolutely cut off from light and air. The stench was unendurable. There were five or six beds in each cellar, and the beds were loathsome in filth. Families inhabited them. On one foul floor I detected something whitish—the face of the father, who had come in drunk the night before and had lain there ever since in blissful oblivion, while close over his head the cradle bobbed up and down, suspended from the ceiling in Russian fashion, as before described. The black beetles (*tarakans*) were so thick on the walls that when I lighted a match or candle I could not see walls or ikons or clock face, but only beetles faintly stirring about. In one lodging the police had just paid a visit, and "in the interests of morality" had ordered partitions to be set up between the beds of men and women. "So," said a woman, without complaint, "we have just cut up the beds and made partitions of them, and now we must sleep on the floor." The rent of a bed was between 1s. and 2s. a week according to quality. Gorki's great play called "Na Dnie" ("In the Depths," or "The Submerged") gives a picture that is pleasing compared with the reality as I saw it, and I saw the play performed in the Art Theatre one evening after I had spent the day in the midst of the reality. When the revolution of eleven years later apportioned the dwellings of the rich and great among the workers, the change to them must have been perceptible.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FROSTY CAUCASUS

ὦ δῖος αἰθὴρ, καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαὶ,  
ποταμῶν τε πηγαὶ, ποντίων τε κυμάτων  
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμήτορ τε γῆ,  
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ·  
ἴδεσθέ μ', οἶα πρὸς θεῶν πάσχω θεός.

*Prometheus Bound*, 88-92.

AFTER such scenes, and after rolling slowly for three days and nights across the great plains of Central Russia, and the undulating steppes of the Don Cossacks, home of horses, I was seized with inexpressible delight when, always watching eagerly from the carriage window, I saw a sudden gleam of silver high in air—unimaginably high in air—amid the purple gloom of sullen storm before us. I knew that the silver gleam must be snow upon a summit of the Caucasus, and let me die if the approach to mountains does not always make my heart leap up.

Leaving the stuffy express guarded by soldiers, four to each carriage, I was taken by a side line up to Vladikavkaz ("Hold of the Caucasus"), whence begins the great Georgian road constructed by the Russians in the 'sixties of last century. It bisects the long and continuous mountain range, and follows the only practicable pass across it, for the other two passes are far more difficult. For ages this pass has been the overland route from Asia into Europe, and the road is marked by ruins of castles and fortifications far more ancient than the Cossack outposts planted by the Russians. But for the last year or more the Russian Government had declared the pass closed, because the



disturbances in Georgia had made it impossible to repair the road and the bridges, or to control the savage tribes who were reputed to earn a precarious livelihood by depriving travellers of their money and their lives. So I was kept two days in Vladikavkaz bargaining against natural objections to risk. It was an exquisite delay. The little town was savagely beautiful in itself, and so was the work of its main industry—the making of long daggers and knives such as Georgians and other Caucasians habitually wear stuck in their girdles, partly for slaughter, partly for cooking, but chiefly for masculine adornment. The other industry was the making of girdles or belts and brooches inlaid with silver and black steel, such as are sometimes seen even in London. But more beautiful still—beautiful as the crystal battlements of heaven—rose the vast precipices and summits of the central chain, striped with cloud, often half hidden, or gleaming out unexpectedly in the sky where real snow and edges of solid rock seemed impossible. At dawn of the second day, I saw the whole range above me, clear without a cloud. Kazbek stood supreme as a vast pinnacle with a dome of snow, but finest of all to me was a great flat-topped and precipitous mountain of rock just at the end of the Vladikavkaz valley. And over all breathed the pure and immemorial smell of mountains, so poignant in its appeal that I can hardly endure it.

Having concluded a treaty after endless negotiations during the day, I climbed a low green hill above the town in the evening, and later I wrote in my diary :

“ Sat there till after sunset, staring at the mountains, with no thought but longing and regret and hopes that cannot now come true. After the sun was just hidden, the whole range stood cold and distinct in violet against a pale yellow sky that turned to crimson. Kazbek kept the yellow sunlight far longer than the other heights which looked almost his equal. A church bell in the town was ringing. The cattle were hurrying home to their several bedrooms, and the voices of women and children rose. It was peace, but a different peace from the Swiss Alps or the French—a savage

peace, full of uncertainty. The distant range westward (towards Circassia) stood out clear, like a saw. In the town I expected minarets, and desired them ; it was all so Balkan. I realised the meaning of one woman, that the Caucasus terrifies and allures. Everything I love most is like that ; certainly some women are. I thought long upon the differences between people who live and write among easy appearances or second-hand information, and those writers who work among stern and first-hand realities as the Russian writers do. But I was ill all day and in terrible pain, and I thought of Donkin, tutor of Keble, the excellent musician in my Oxford days, dying among unknown precipices up there, alone."

Next morning I started merrily in a little cart with four horses all abreast, driven by a rosy, smiling Tartar boy, who reverently kissed his father's hand before mounting for the adventure, and at the regulation hours spread his little tarpaulin mat for prayer, while I, with compass in hand, pointed the approximate position of Mecca, making it south-south-west. That I might not be dumb, I had persuaded an old inhabitant born in Königsberg, to travel, as he put it, "under my protection," because he had business at a distant point on the road, but had not dared to set out alone. The chief danger was supposed to lurk in passing through the tribe called the Ingoosh, on the steep climb up to the stony village of Kazbek, which stands just below the enormous red cliffs of that mountain rival to Elbruz. But expected dangers are seldom serious, and on the first day we came through the Ingoosh district without the loss of anything but fear. At one point a little plateau of ruined walls and forsaken fields showed where an Ingoosh village had acquired such enviable wealth by brigandage that the Russian Government had appropriated the wealth and utterly destroyed the village, except only one house, which still sheltered a family to perpetuate the predatory breed. And when the living representative of the race came down to greet me, splendid in his high white cap of curly wool, I observed that from his eyes looked forth an

unconcealed and indestructible honesty. The only troubles worth counting on the journey arose from loss of the road in the early gathering darkness, the broken edges hanging over deep abysses above the glacier torrents, and the scantiness of food in the starveling villages, which live on nothing but grass—grass transformed into little shaggy cattle which are exchanged for maize and clothing in the lower valleys. Language, it is true, was another difficulty, for throughout the Caucasus (and the range extends some nine hundred miles in almost unbroken length) languages lie, as it were, in strata, which mark the several invasions of the lower districts from prehistoric times downwards, the conquered peoples being continually pushed higher and higher up into the wilderness of the crags. And how to relate the topmost peoples, or how to interpret their tongues, not even Germans know.

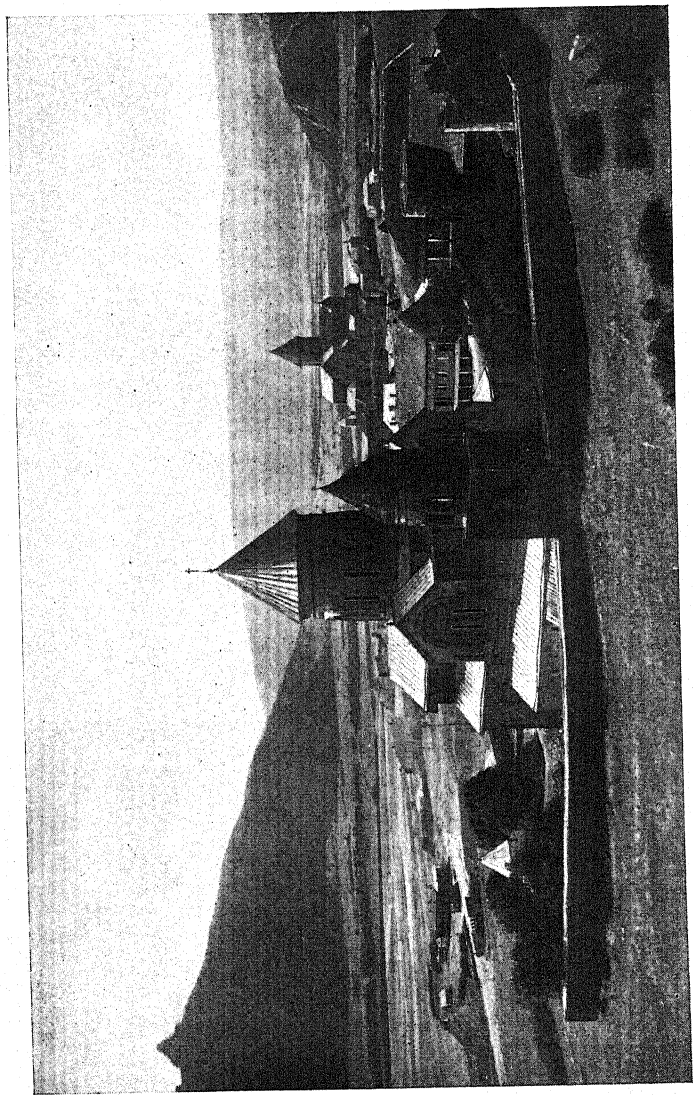
The drive took us three days, and we slept two nights in bare shelters, very cold. The distance is said to be 150 miles, but can hardly be so much—not far over a hundred, I suspect. But for splendour, I suppose, there is nothing like it, except perhaps in the Himalayas. Glaciers seemed few. I counted only three, and those narrow. But the higher mountains run into fine crystalline forms, like the Aiguilles of Mont Blanc, splendid in bareness, being too steep for snow to rest upon, except in the crannies, though on the highest of all, as on the dome of Kazbek, the snow is evidently very deep. At one place, half a day's journey beyond the grim village of Kazbek, the road mounts by long zigzags through a region of snow, where it must be protected from avalanches by huge walls and tunnels with iron roofing sometimes a quarter of a mile long, as on many Swiss roads. And so one reaches the true summit of the pass, where for about eight miles the snow is forty feet deep even in autumn, as it was then. But though the road was officially closed, it was still kept clear by watchers living in little houses upon the snow, and working with shovels and a huge wooden plough weighted by lumps of rock. A

monument of a great cross marks the actual top, and from that point, looking far into the purple distance one sees the mountains towards Ararat, two hundred miles away. From that point too the water begins to run south, though still ultimately into the Caspian. So one descends gradually among lower mountains, hills, and valleys into Georgia, the great range of Caucasus not rising with sudden abruptness on that side as on the northern face, but falling gently through every level of fertility. At last I reached the common ground at Mtskhét (spell it as you please, but pronounce Míshkétt), the ancient capital of Georgia, with its fortified cathedral, tomb of Georgian kings, and perhaps of the great Queen Tamara herself—great in empire, great in love, and great in the wisdom of slaying her lovers, as the female spider and the queen bee do, before their love became a habit.

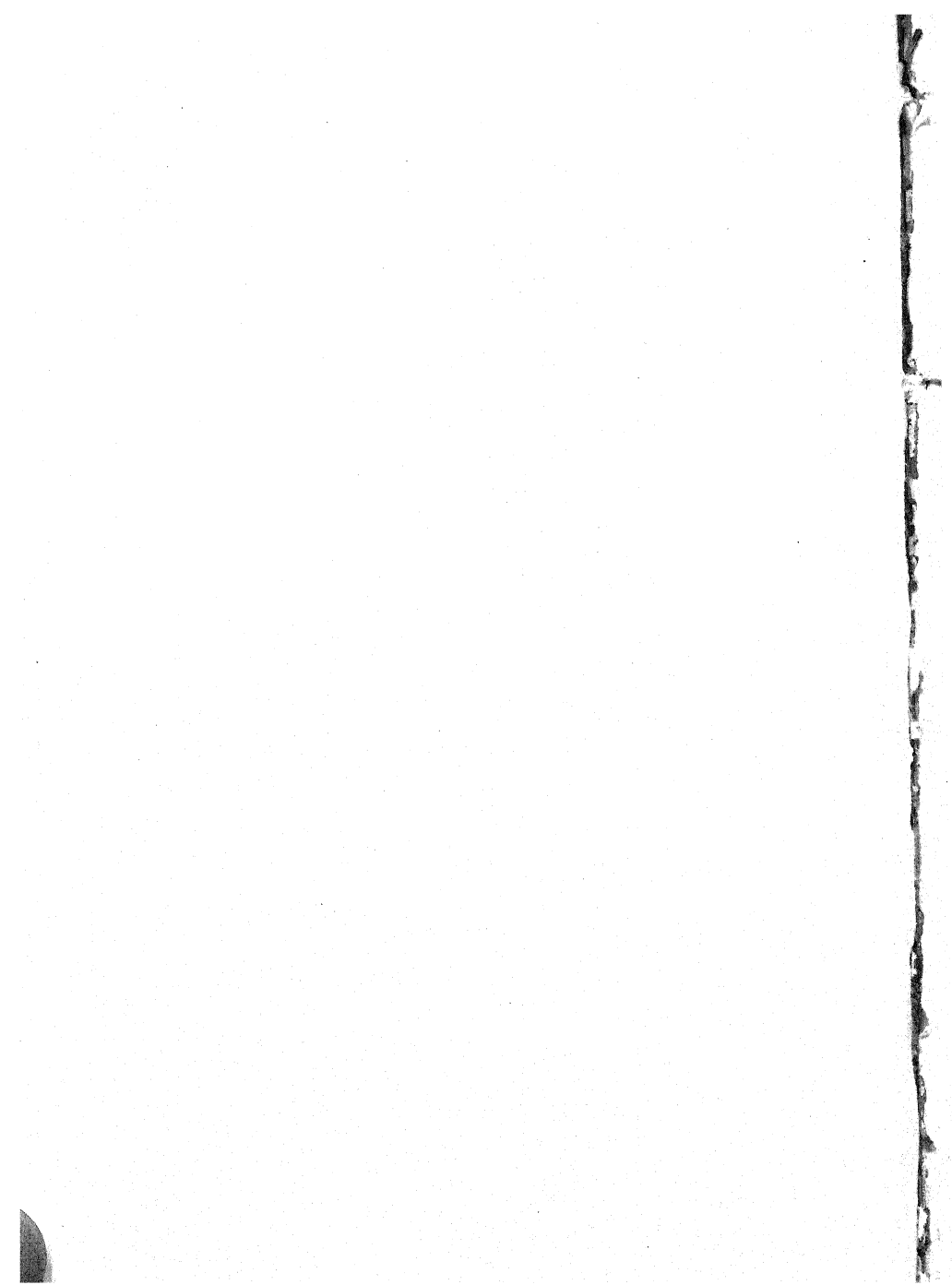
The ibex (*tur*), wild sheep, and wild goats, are common in the mountains, but the only wild animal I had the joy of seeing was a great brown bear, the most successful of all Nature's grotesques. He was lumbering about beside a stream, rising on his hind legs in search of wild grapes or crab-apples; for he professes himself a strict vegetarian unless he gets a chance of lamb. After dancing around for a while, he plunged into the torrent, swam right through, and without so much as shaking himself, cantered airily up a green slope into the forest, laughing in every limb. But of birds, as in Russia generally, I saw few beautiful kinds; only some flights of goldfinches, rejoicing in the seeding thistles.

The railway running right across the Caucasian isthmus from Batoum on the Black Sea to Baku on the Caspian, took me to Tiflis in a few hours. There I was welcomed by Prince Tcherkésoff and his wife, a Dutch woman by birth, clever at all languages and practical enterprises calling for courage, persistence, and rapid decision.<sup>1</sup> They

<sup>1</sup> Varlaam Tcherkésoff was born on his family's estate near the Alazan valley in Georgia, and so inherited the title of "Kniaz," or "Prince," given in compliment to all Georgian landowners. After finishing his course



MTSKHET—THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF GEORGIA



accompanied me, together or separately, nearly all over Caucasia. We went up the long Alazan valley, looking across dense layers of white cloud like a frozen sea to the Daghestan mountains, wild in themselves and the habitat of wild Lesghian Moslems. The river bed of that valley is marshy forest, haunted with deadly fever, but the sides above a certain elevation produce every good thing that grows, especially vast quantities of grapes, the wine from which, pressed into earthenware vats big enough to hold the man who cleans them, is drawn off into buffalo skins that were driven joggling away on carts into Russia, or were shipped to France to serve as "body" for the "Burgundy" and "Bordeaux." The little villages, along the mountain-side, from Signakh up to Tionet at the head of the valley, flowed with new wine, all the more abundantly because it was the last week before Advent, and those who wanted to marry had to marry in haste before the feast began. So on every side horses galloped, and brides were captured as of old, and in front of the bridal processions went the minstrelsy of bagpipe, mandolin, and drum, followed by one who carried bits of bread and meat on a stick, and a skin of wine to give bite and sup to all who asked. Here they were dancing before the church door while the ceremony was performed; and here went the buffalo wagon

at the Military School in Moscow, he refused to become an officer in the Russian Army, lest he should be sent against his own people. When the famous Tchaykovsky Circle was started in 1872, he joined it, and was imprisoned for four years in the Peter-Paul fortress. He was then banished to Siberia, but escaped, and made his way to England, passing in disguise through Moscow and St. Petersburg. In London he met Kropotkin, with whom he agreed in opposition to the orthodox Marxian group. Accordingly, like Kropotkin, he went to Switzerland, and joined the revolutionary Federalist Section of the First International, helping Stepniak and Kropotkin on the paper *Obchina*. After 1883 he was for three years in Georgia, doing propaganda work under a foreign passport, and afterwards wandering for some years more in Turkey, the Balkans, and London. He returned to his country under the short-lived armistice of 1905. After more years of exile, he returned again at the Russian revolution of 1917, but only to be driven out once more when the Soviet Government invaded Georgia early in 1921, and proceeded to imprison and execute all leaders of Georgian patriotism.

bearing the dowry of household goods all covered neatly up with a white sheet. Amid such merriment, day by day we reeled up the valley's side, passing a slimy lake where at regular intervals sulphur bubbles to the surface from the breath of a tormented priest, who boils below for ever because he refused free burial to a widow's son.<sup>1</sup> And passing the little town of Telaf, we reached the isolated home of an energetic Englishman, who was sinking soundings for oil just below the summit of the watershed. There he kept his hounds for hunting wolves and bears in the forest, and his workmen at 10s. a week, with hut and doctor thrown in, and his Georgian wife, whom he had carried off by force from a Georgian lover and appeared to satisfy, though neither he nor she could understand a word of the other's language. True love's words are ever few, but upon the arrival of her kinsman the amiable woman's torrent of speech went loose, as when the tongue of Anatole France's Dumb Wife was released by the operation of medieval saws, pincers, and axes.

During another fine journey with the head of the ancient Georgian family of Orbiliani, with whom I stayed in his simple old country house, overlooked by his still more ancient castle, I came upon one of the four or five German villages settled in various parts of the Caucasus about ninety years before. They arose from the distress in Germany after the Napoleonic wars, from the extermination of the Württemberg legion that had followed Napoleon to Moscow, from doctrinal differences with the Lutheran Church, but especially from the warnings of a Suabian prophetess who felt inwardly that the world would end in 1836. Relying on her prescience, some five hundred families started off from Suabia for Jerusalem, after the manner described in Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea," but with

<sup>1</sup> Another scientific explanation says that a peasant refused to go to church on Transfiguration Day, because he had seen himself and his wife transfigured into two old people with four children, and that was enough for him. So the earth swallowed him down.



the more definite object of reaching the Holy City as the best place in which to await the Last Judgment. Down the Danube they struggled to its mouth, and then by land to Odessa, through the Crimea, to Rostoff-on-Don, and Vladikavkaz. Thence over the great pass before the military road was thought of, and in the Caucasus they were invited to settle upon apportioned land, where they have since remained. They kept one eye on Jerusalem till 1843, when they sent a commission of three to make enquiries about the end of the world, but finding it postponed, they abandoned belief in the prophetess, and resolved to make the best of this present world while it lasted. I found them rigidly German still, speaking the Suabian dialect, and worshipping in a German church. Houses, bread, ham, beds, books, pictures, cushions, and chorales on the harmonium—all were German. But the children were trained to speak Russian and Tartar, and the women were said to favour the Lesghian Moslems, who travel about as carpenters and builders, and so preserve the communities from the degeneration of in-breeding. The village that I stayed in numbered 800 homes with 2500 inhabitants—clean, intelligent, and hardworking people.

With Tcherkésoff I passed along the wandering and casual railway over the Anti-Caucasus through Alexandropol (the junction for Kars) to Erivan on the old Araxes valley, where shaggy camels, with looks disdaining this puddle of a world, folded up their legs to deposit the loads of carpets and oriental merchandise coming from Tabriz and the rest of Persia, and received in exchange the tin pots, petrol cans, and cast-off clothing of the West. Only a few miles southwest of Erivan, across a series of primitive watermills worked by dark flowing streams such as William Morris and Burne-Jones would have loved to know, we came to Etchmiadzin, the sacred Church of the Armenians. The name signifies "The Only-Begotten is Descended," for it was here that Gregory the Illuminator beheld a remarkable vision and established the Armenian Church within three

centuries of the death of Christ. So this has been the centre of that scattered and tormented race, the only rivals of the Jews in persecution and persistence, for the six centuries during which their ancient capital of Ani has stood as an empty ruin in the desert between Kars and the mountain of Alagöz which confronts Ararat with almost equal height. The ancient church contains a considerable fragment of the Saint's body, together with many other sanctified bones, and a piece of timber hewn from Noah's Ark when it was discovered still resting on the dip between the lesser and the greater heights of Ararat, though seaworthy no more.

Of greater interest to me were the holy relics of men's souls that lie hidden away for ever upon the shelves of the great monastic library. Many thousand souls are there buried among the leaves of manuscripts and printed books, to which no mortal will ever give a thought again. For the library is a graveyard from which there is no resurrection. Many volumes I saw there in ancient tongues that few can now read—many disquisitions upon the attributes of the Divine Essence, and on the numerous ambushes set by the Evil One on each side the razor-edge of virtue's path. Now in their deserted oblivion, all had become venerable to me as the ruins of shrines where no taper burns, or of cathedrals unvisited by any worshipper. More venerated still should be a volume shut in a case by itself, and bound in carved ivory boards of early Byzantine work. For it is a text of the Gospels, written in large uncials eighty years before our battle of Hastings, and copied from a fifth-century manuscript, some of whose illuminated pages have been bodily transferred into the present text. It was in this book that the Oxford scholar, F. C. Conybeare, whom I once knew, detected about the year 1890 a significant line of vermilion writing, in the last chapter of St. Mark. If familiarity had not blunted our perception, everyone would have noticed that the Gospel ends hurriedly at verse eight, and was left unfinished. The writer of the Etchmiadzin copy also intended to end there, for he has filled up the rest of the line

after verse eight with vermilion flourishes and stars. Then, as though on second thoughts, at the top of his flourishes and stars, in the same vermilion ink, he has casually added the information that the rest of the text, which he has copied out in the usual black uncials, was really the work of Ariston. This information he almost certainly copied from the fifth-century manuscript, which in its turn may possibly have been a copy of the manuscript actually written by St. Mark, who wrote, according to old tradition, under the direction of St. Peter—the same who wept bitterly when he heard the cock crow. And it may have been to St. Mark's actual writing that Ariston added his hurried and confused conclusion. For Conybeare conjectured this Ariston to be the same mentioned by Papias as one of Christ's disciples.<sup>1</sup>

More startling to me than even that strange discovery was the sight of a Bishop in the secluded monastery trying to learn a little English by spelling out Shakespeare with an English-German dictionary. He had studied in Berlin, and with pride pointed to the forty-five volumes of Goethe on the shelves, but now in his masculine solitude he was reading Shakespeare, and had begun with "Romeo and Juliet." I looked at the beloved text again, and as I looked it turned more vermilion than the rubric of Ariston. It became like Dante's lady who so glowed with passion that she would have been invisible in flame :

My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep ; the more I give to thee  
The more I have, for both are infinite.

I looked around the room. I looked at its tractates of theology, and its ikons of starveling saints :

Come, night !—Come, Romeo ! come thou day in night !  
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night,  
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.—  
Come, gentle night ; come, loving, black-brow'd night,  
Give me my Romeo.

<sup>1</sup> The story of this discovery is told in Swete's edition of the Gospel of St. Mark, and in the first edition there is a photograph of the page as I saw it.

I looked at the dictionary, and at the bearded Bishop in black cowl and long black robe, and then out of the window, at the frozen plain of the Araxes and the gloomy, storm-swept pyramid of Ararat beyond, and all seemed very far away from Juliet and me.

In another room—an upper chamber of pleasing austerity—I was invited to see an old, old man, sitting up in bed, his hands lying quiet, white, and wasted almost to the bone upon the grey blanket that served as counterpane. The nightgown hid a form so thin it hardly made a ripple under the clothes. Through the white and shrunken face every lineament of the future skull was already visible. But on each side of the thin nose, hooked like a round bow, a great brown eye revealed the inward spirit's intelligence and zeal unquenched. On his head was a close-fitting cap of purple velvet. So it was that one of last century's greatest men—Mgrditch Khrimian, Katholikos of the Armenian Church, and incarnate soul of the Armenian people—lay slowly approaching death.

Just beyond Ararat, on the shore of Lake Van, that last puddle of the Deluge, he was born, eighty-seven years before I saw him. The Turkish Empire was then undiminished by sea and land; Shelley had still two years to live, and Byron four. Long and stormy had been the life upon which the old man now looked back; but not unhappy, for it had been inspired by one absorbing and unselfish aim—the freedom and regeneration of his people. He was possessed by such spirit as kindles only in oppressed and persecuted races, but dies into easy-going tolerance among the prosperous and contented of the world. In youth, as a national poet, he wandered up and down through the scattered portions of Armenia, to Constantinople and Jerusalem. After his wife's death, he entered the monastic order, and devoted himself to the building of schools, throwing them open to Kurds, the hereditary assassins of his race. Through the middle of the century he journeyed, like St. Paul, around Asia, Turkey, and the neighbouring countries, continually

defeated, his schools burnt, his printing-presses broken up, his sacred emblems of the Host hung in mockery round the necks of dogs. Four years after being elected Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople (1869) he was driven from his office by the Turk. After the Russian Army had marched to the gates of the city, he was summoned to the Congress of Berlin, visiting beforehand the Courts of the Great Powers, and thus becoming acquainted with Gladstone. At the Congress he gained for his people the soothing promises of Article 61, pledging the Powers, and especially England, to hold the Kurds in check and enforce Turkey's definite reforms. Those pledges and promises no one attempted to observe, and Armenians were left to stew, apparently in the hope that they would evaporate in the process. There followed what was then thought the unexampled crime of 1894-6, when the Armenians were slaughtered like sheep from the Bosphorus to Lake Van, and Gladstone made the last great speech of his life; of course in vain. France, Germany, and Russia combined to secure immunity for the "great assassin," and rather than make a stir Lord Rosebery abandoned the Liberal Party for the languor of an amateur in literature. The lowest point of Europe's shame up to that time was reached.

As I conversed with him, the old man no longer contemplated an autonomous Armenia. On the Russian side of the frontier, the Armenian villages were too interspersed with Georgians and Tartars. On the Turkish side, massacre and exile had left too few to form a community. For twelve years the wretched Armenians had been crawling over the foot of Ararat to escape the Kurds, and indeed I saw fresh groups of them standing outside the monastery door, possessing nothing in the world but variegated rags of pink and blue to cover them, and their faith in the Katholikos, who lay there dying—happily dying before the overwhelming murder of his race eight years later was accomplished and Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty was wiped out with its object. Taking my leave of that link coupling us with the

last century, I returned to Erivan, and remained long in the glittering ruins of a Persian palace, far removed from monastic austerity, and telling of the time when even Persia was capable of government as of art.

To Baku I was obliged to journey alone, passing down the long eastern slope of the Koura from Tiflis until it almost merges with the Araxes. The region becomes more and more like an African desert, but in the course of a day and half a night one reaches the shores of the Caspian, which the poet of the "Prometheus" had dimly heard of as "the lake at the world's edge, where spearmen stand watching like eagles from peaks that overhang the gulf of nothingness." Yet it is a sea, with rocks and a narrow beach of yellow sand, much like other seas, except that a horse driven hard by thirst can just manage to drink of it. The whole country around recalls the inexhaustible myth of Prometheus. For here, I think, must have struck that fateful hour in history when a furry, long-armed, melancholic creature discovered flame—flame that could be used and multiplied so that wretched mankind need no longer cower for warmth around the craters of active volcanoes, snatching a fearful joy. The record of that stupendous hour has vanished past recall, but immemorial tradition has fixed upon the Caucasus as the scene. That tale of the Titan who so loved and pitied mankind that he stole fire from heaven and brought it down in a reed; that tale of an omnipotent and jealous God who grudged to shivering man the divinest comfort of heaven; and how the tender-hearted rebel incurred a similar penalty to that of all tender-hearted people and was crucified upon the mountain precipice, alternately scorched by the sun and frozen by the cold, while the God's bird of prey devoured his frustrated heart—here in the Caucasus that drama was enacted.

To a niche in the eastern extremity of the vast mountain chain fire-worshippers came for centuries, crossing the Caspian from Persia and the stream of the Oxus. They came to worship the eternal fires which flicker above crannies in

the limestone rock at Sourakhani, barely twelve miles inland from the shore. Enterprising villagers have now fitted the sacred crannies with pipes, and use the vapours as household gas. But the mystery of flame abides, and I would worship there as readily as at any shrine. But close by, at Baku, fire was celebrating its latest victory in modern style. There is, to be sure, an ancient Moslem quarter in Baku, but the great oil city itself was something like Johannesburg, or like any British or American upstart town in a mining district, only dirtier, smokier, and stinking worse. There was the same scrap-iron look about it, the same air of haste and careless neglect, the same alternate slush and depths of dust upon the streets. And the spirit of life was the same. Day and night the whole city gambled. From the Stock Exchange and the great Russian Club down to the humblest supper table, men, women, and children all gambled. At every meal in every restaurant, lotto-cards were brought to each customer at 2s. apiece, and above the clatter of knives and forks resounded the banker's cry calling out the numbers on the wheel, while the preoccupied and silent guests filled up the rows of squares with counters, in the bare hope of being the first to fill them and take a pound or two home. In other respects Baku bragged of its reputation as the foulest city in the world, and next to gambling the most innocent forms of amusement were getting drunk and firing revolvers at the ceiling, with what object I did not discover, but perhaps it was to stimulate Russian gaiety.

In business also, as in pleasure, life was violent and uncertain. The workmen were organised into fighting groups, usually under political names, such as "Social Democrats" or "Anarchist Communists," but with objects rather lucrative than statesmanlike. The Scottish manager of one oil-field, for instance, showed me a letter addressing him with brief emphasis as "Parasite!" bearing the stamp of a group, and demanding a large sum of money on pain of death. He told me the agents of the group called at the hour mentioned, and he always paid up, entering the sum

in his accounts under the head of "Office Expenses." If he refused, he would be sure to be murdered within a day or two, and if he betrayed the agents, all his family would share his fate. Another manager showed me an account delivered to him of the manner in which his contribution had been expended: "Item, to purchase of revolvers; item, to hire of carriage to the place of execution; item, to the assassin for the murder of X.Y.," and so on. He only complained that champagne, women, and other carnal delights did not figure on the debit side. In self-protection, the richer managers and owners had mustered gangs of hired assassins, each pledged to murder at least one person named, if the employer or manager was killed. Some even published in the morning papers the names and addresses of the men who would immediately be slain if they themselves were murdered, thus giving a new and varied interest to the "agony column" every day.

The wealthiest of all the owners even kept a company of armed men always watching at the back door of his palace. But he was a Tartar and lived in perpetual apprehension of Armenian vengeance. For it was between Tartars and Armenians that the bloodiest feud raged, and hardly a day passed without an open murder on the streets. The Armenians, who in the previous year (1905) had been slaughtered to the number of three thousand, were at last beginning to turn. They also had armed companies and batteries of machine-guns, and the Tartars felt surprise and discomfort. It was in hope of enlisting my sympathy for the Tartar cause that Hadji Tagieff, the wealthy Tartar aforesaid, gave a huge banquet in my honour, and from my notes on the occasion I may extract a few passages:

"There were over eighty guests, all Tartars but three Georgians. I sat on the right of the great man—a Turk in appearance, black-bearded, though he is over sixty; wearing an Astrakan cap; deep wrinkles in the back of his neck; something rough and kindly and humorous in his nature, derived from old days when he worked here as a common



porter. He cannot read, and all his knowledge is of men and oil. But he has founded twelve Tartar schools in Baku within a year, a Philanthropic Society, and the only theatre. He does an immense business, and is said to be worth £5,000,000. His enemies call him cunning, but except for spitting on the Persian, but aniline-dyed, carpet, he behaved quite decently, and of course gave me all the choicest portions off his own plate, with embarrassing politeness. He has just married his third wife, a cultivated girl of nineteen, who goes about unveiled, except when with him; but of course she did not appear.

"On my other side sat a little Tartar, meek as a professor, though he had translated 'Faust' and parts of Shakespeare, and above all the superb passage of Milton on light and his blindness, which he was delighted to hear me pronounce in the English manner. He was born a man of letters, but had once been a painter, and severely criticised the imaginary fresco of Constantinople on the wall of the huge banqueting hall, saying it was untrue to nature, though the idea of the City was really grand.

"The table literally 'groaned' So did the waiters. One in trying to lift a huge silver dish of fruit, would have dropped it if we had not sprung to his assistance as he stood sweating with fear. Caviare, two kinds of soup, turkeys, lambs, various vegetables, ice-pudding, cheese at intervals, and piles of fruit and grapes—so it went on, the speeches beginning with the caviare and continuing for the whole three hours. The editor of the leading Tartar paper spoke in French. I spoke in German, and so did two others. All speeches were translated into Tartar, a dialect of Turkish. The honour and praise of England was pathetic, and partly genuine. All hoped (especially the Georgians) for her protection and friendly alliance. There was much talk of the *Chronicle* and the *Manchester Guardian*, and much of the Liberal Party, though they said 'all Englishmen are Liberal.' They said I was the first Englishman who had come among them to understand the burning question, and so the heads of the whole Tartar population had been gathered in my honour. Bitter hatred of the Armenians was expressed in every speech, and all agreed that the Armenians were resolved to drive all Tartars and Georgians from the Caucasus, though they numbered only 900,000 as against 7,500,000 Tartars (out of the 32,000,000 Tartars in all Russia) and over 3,500,000 Georgians."

As to the oil itself, the managers gave me queer explanations : it was " coal in a different form," " rock fused by volcanoes," or " the refuse of immense shoals of shellfish." Many thought the oil was still being formed. There it lay, generally mixed with much water, in the sandy rock and loam, at varying levels from 700 to 1000 feet down, but sometimes rising so close to the surface that it could be bailed out by hand. The surface of all the " fields " was thickly covered with tall, black " derricks " or sheds, generally built of gypsum or sheet iron as a protection against fire ; and under each derrick a machine-pump dropped a narrow tube or " bucket " 35 feet long down the casing of the well, into which it just fitted. The bucket brought up " crude oil " mixed with water, and poured it as a brownish, yellowish liquid into the reservoirs, from which it was carried in pipes to the refineries. The temperature of the oil was about 75° Fahrenheit, and a good well yielded from 180,000 lb. weight to 288,000 lb. in 24 hours. A new well was sunk by a borer or " bit," with a sharp edge, which was dropped by wrought-iron rods down the lengthening shaft and raised and dropped again till the sand at the bottom was puddled into a liquid that could be pumped out. An extra piece of casing was then lowered down the shaft, and the process began again—the bit being kept at work some 2 or 3 feet below the casing. The rods often twisted like corkscrews, but if they snapped and dropped the bit down the shaft from a height, an explosion followed which flung the bit and all out into the open air through the top of the derrick. And this was the chief danger, for the working was otherwise safe, and no men went below the surface. " Spouts " were rare and never desired, for they broke up the machinery and carried much oil away to waste.

" Crude " was used for locomotives, but most of the oil was refined into benzine, petrol, and kerosene, the refuse, or " mazout," being consumed for common fuel and furnaces. But the oil will burn in almost any form, and I saw the workmen's wives and daughters skimming off the surface

of the "refuse ports" or pools with rags which they squeezed into buckets for family warmth and lighting, or to sell at about 9 lb. for a farthing. All were naked below the waist, but the few Tartar women among them kept their faces veiled, out of a sense of decency. A Tartar workman earned from 10s. to 15s. a week in wages, and could save nearly all of it; for he drank only petroleum and water, and his food was mainly bread, with cucumber added in summer, though sometimes I saw men bringing basins of stew to warm at the stoves. Lodgings in "barracks," with iron shelves as beds, were provided free, the various Moslem nationalities being kept separate, and the Christians, of course, excluded to avoid midnight murder. I found that the English companies had introduced baths, so necessary for Moslems, and libraries that Christians prefer.

In one barrack-room I came upon a dignified and white-bearded figure, covered from head to foot with variegated rags, and surrounded by a crowd of workers. In his hand was a long pole and a leather sack hung over his shoulder. The men were pressing sums of money into his hand—silver and rouble notes—and after counting each sum carefully over in turn, he hid it away, sometimes in the bag, sometimes in various holes or chinks among his rags. Before the end he must have been so stuffed with coin that if I had shaken him, he would have rained down treasure. The manager of the oil-field called him vaguely a Mullah or a Fakir, but he was, in fact, a travelling bank, a primitive money order, a substitute for cheques. The Moslems were sending their six-months' savings, tucked away in his clothes, to their families far across the Caspian, perhaps on the frontiers of Bokhara, or in Samarcand, or beyond. He could not write or read, but he knew the village of each, and the amount of the money entrusted to him correct to the last farthing. In that land where life goes for little, and violence for nothing, he was never robbed, though at times he carried as much as £1000. The men regarded him with perfect confidence, which was more than anyone could say for the Russian

Imperial Post, with its iniquitous system of censorship and espionage and robbery. So having thus safely invested his money, each pious Moslem turned to private prayer upon his bedstead, bending his body up and down with the regular movement that denotes intensity of worship, and uttering his petitions in a high-pitched singsong, no doubt intelligible to whom they were addressed. To be sure, the prayer was private only in the sense that the suppliant was conscious of nothing beyond his devotion, and took no more notice of the outside world than if it had no existence. And it would be interesting to discover why no one thought it strange, though if an Englishman knelt upon his bed at midday, or beside the public counter in a savings-bank, and prayed aloud he would hardly escape the mad asylum.

But it was to the west of Caucasia that I turned with greatest interest ; for it is from Tiflis to the Black Sea that the unmixed race of the true Georgians are to be found, and it was there that they had tried an experiment of unusual promise to the world. In an evil year (1783) the Georgian King, Irakli II, appealed to Catherine of Russia for aid against Turks and Persians on the south, and the Moslems of the Caucasus on the north, and a fatal treaty was then signed. By it the Georgians were to retain their monarchy, and they have had only one monarch since, and he was short-lived ; they were to serve only in a national militia, and the Russians have sent them to die in Siberia and the Arctic Provinces as conscripts ; no more than two Russian battalions were to be stationed in Georgia, and now 180,000 Russian troops were quartered upon the country, and each village and little town had to pay in cash for their food and lodging ; the Georgian Church was to remain independent, and Russia's Holy Synod had enslaved and robbed it ; the Georgian language was to remain the tongue of schools and official life, and now it was forbidden in both ; government was to remain in Georgian hands, and now Russian officers and Russian bureaucrats ruled supreme under Voromtzeff Dashkoff, the Tsar's Governor-General in Tiflis. In 1801

the Tsar Alexander I had formally annexed the country, and from that time the Russification of the Georgian people had been carried out with increasing violence.

The defeat of the Tsar's armies by the Japanese revived the hope of liberty in Georgia as in Russia. A system of passive resistance or boycott against all Russian officials was adopted, and a form of communal self-government arose in the villages of the western provinces, especially of Guria, which lies along the course of the Rion (the ancient Phasis) and adjoins the Black Sea. The villagers made their own laws, and acted in village meetings as their own law-courts and judges. It was of this experiment Tolstoy wrote to a friend in 1904 :

“What is happening in Guria is an event of immense importance. Tell the Gurians that there is an old man who for twenty years has been ceaselessly repeating that all the evils of humanity are due to the fact that men are always expecting to find some external aid with which to organise their lives ; and when they see that the authorities do not aid them and do not create order, they begin to accuse them, to condemn them, to revolt against them. What should be done is exactly what the Gurians are doing—namely to organise life in such a manner that there should be no need for any authority. Tell them that not I alone but many others rejoice in their work, and are ready to help them if it is necessary and possible, and that we are all convinced that, having undertaken this great task, they will not abandon it, but will continue in the same road, giving an example to the world.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus for nearly two years the Georgians enjoyed an independence and social happiness such as philosophers have only dreamed of. But after the suppression of the revolution in Moscow the Tsar felt himself strong enough to proceed with the slaughter of his Georgian subjects. Alikhánoff, a Lesghian of Moslem stock, was put in command of two army corps. In four divisions he brought his

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Luigi Villari in his excellent book, “Fire and Sword in the Caucasus” (1906).

troops from Tiflis over the low watershed that parts the Caspian rivers from the Black Sea rivers, and he made his head-quarters at the old Georgian city of Kutais. The place stands high, commanding a wide view over the whole valley of the Phasis, so rich in legend and history, and from end to end the country smoked. The cry of murdered men and violated women and starving children arose, but there was none to listen, and the will of the Russian Government was accomplished in the customary manner.

The Georgians are a fine and strikingly handsome people, strong of feature, noble in bearing, and hardly to be equalled in freshness of intellect and delight in knowledge. Attacked by Russians, they looked like an eyrie of eagles attacked by myriads of hooded crows. Under Alikhánoff, the main work of devastation was assigned to Colonel Kriloff of the Chersonese (33rd) Regiment, and express orders from the Tsar were issued to show no mercy. No mercy was shown. In irresistible numbers the Russian troops poured over the country. They swept from village to village, burning the wooden houses and the wooden garners in which the maize was stored. The isolation of the peasants' homes made their destruction easier and resistance less possible. One after another the cottages were converted into grey ashes spread on the hard earth around the central chimney-stack and the short stone pillars on which the cottages were built to keep them from damp. All else perished in the fire, or was carried off in wagon-loads of loot. Winter had set in with terrible severity when I passed through the devastated land (January, 1907). Day after day the storm raged, the mountains were invisible, the bases of the hills stood deep in snow. Roads and bridges were washed away by torrents. Columns of sleet and rain moved over the forests upon a bitter wind. Ten miles inland I could hear the roaring of the sea as it broke upon the shingle of Colchis, and thunder accompanied the howling of the tempest.

I found the villagers encamped among the black and

sodden ruins of their homes. For some months after the invasion they had lived in the rocks and caves of the mountains, creeping down at night to carry away any food that might have escaped the burning. At the first approach of the troops they had hidden away the women and girls, for the Russians had received orders from Colonel Kriloff to work their will upon them. "Bring us your women!" cried the officers to the prisoners they took; "It is the women and girls we want. The Tsar wishes loyal subjects to be bred." Some of the women were found. A Georgian boy was hanged for killing the soldier who was violating his mother. Many women went mad. Some I saw still torpid and semi-conscious with fear and misery. Some had wandered far into the higher mountains, and had perished in the snow-drifts and crevasses.

Among the ruins of Aketi on the Soupsa River the surviving inhabitants came creeping out from their dog-hutch shelters of wood and straw to tell me what had befallen them. It was early morning when a Russian battalion marched in, and the officer ordered the whole village into the church. While they were there a bugle sounded, and soldiers stationed at each house at once set fire to the wooden buildings, having first plundered them of everything they could carry away. When the people were let out of church they saw their homes going up in columns of smoke and flame that nothing could extinguish. Their coats and boots were taken from them at the church door, and they were driven out into a freezing world in which they had lost everything, even the next meal. In that village over seventy houses were burnt. In another, just over the river, eighty-seven. When I arrived the people were beginning to rebuild, but the devastation was not over. The Russian troops were still quartered in the villages, and every day they went round the country levying exactions, or "executions," as the peasants called them.

A battalion of soldiers was marched off to a village, and the chief men, or even all the inhabitants, were herded together upon the village green, surrounded by soldiers with

ball cartridges and fixed bayonets. The officer-in-command then haggled over the amount the village could pay for the privilege of belonging to the Russian Empire. I saw the people standing there ; often they were kept for days and nights on end, without food or shelter till they agreed to terms or surrendered their hidden leaders. Meanwhile the village had to pay £8 a day for feeding the officers and men who persecuted them, and the final amount of penalty per village was generally about £200. Of course the people could not pay, and the troops carried off any cattle, implements, furniture, or stores that had escaped the former lootings, or had been procured on credit since the first invasion. "It is to ruin you utterly that we are here," said the officer in command in one village while I was present.

In all this destruction, pillage, and murder there was no talk of defending the Empire, and no excuse of strategy. The whole thing was a mere act of vengeance inflicted upon a helpless and undefended little province, because it had dared to reject the incapable and oppressive system of Russian government, and to institute intelligent reforms on its own lines. Guria suffered worst, but all Georgians suffered, and it was hard to leave that beautiful and fertile country, and that noble race of men in such plight of misery and flaming indignation. One gleam of hope alone was visible to me as I came away, and at the time I wrote :

"It is impossible to believe that the ruling caste in St. Petersburg can much longer continue to oppress and persecute, to rob and torture, to exile and murder the immense host of 130,000,000 souls who owe it nominal allegiance. With the development of the Russian revolution, with the disappearance of the Románoff dynasty, the break-up of the centralised bureaucracy, the extermination of the secret police, and the transference of the budget and army to popular control, a change will be wrought, not only in Russia, but in the whole of Europe, such as has not been seen since the Napoleonic wars. Russia may have ten or may have fifty years to wait, but in the splendour of that change Georgia will have her part, and in the great Con-



federacy of All the Russias she will stand conspicuous as a gallant nationality of peculiar interest and peculiar brilliance.”<sup>1</sup>

That was written in 1907. Russia had ten years, not fifty, to wait, till most of those hopes were fulfilled. But to Georgia came no share in the splendour of that change. Only renewed misery came ; only fresh devastation, pillage, and murder ; only new invasion and occupation by Russian troops. After her second brief interval of happiness and freedom, Georgia now lies again at the mercy of the Imperialist conqueror, and whether the oppressor is called the Tsardom or the Soviet, the condition of the oppressed is little different. Michael Farbman, Russian economist and student of Russian history, has lately (1924) told us that in revolutionary Russia old traditions strangely persist. I wish for the credit of the revolution that at all events this atrocious phase of tradition might be abandoned.

But early in January (1907) I was obliged to leave that beautiful land, and that beautiful people, and so I went slowly coasting along the southern shore of the Black Sea, calling at various little ports, chiefly to take on cargoes of living goats, which were lifted by cranes into the hold, with ropes attached either round the horns or round one foot. Happily we stopped long enough at Trebizond to give me time to rush up the heights on which the city stands, perhaps to the very spot where Xenophon (my ideal of life) stood among the soldiers whom he had succeeded in guiding through the centre of unknown Asia, and heard their exultant cry at sight of the sea. It was a French ship I travelled in, and I was interested by two incidents that occurred to the lady passenger. For one day, while I was attempting to converse with an amiable Frenchman at *table-d'hôte*, and he was quietly sprinkling salt over his salad, his wife, who sat at the captain's right hand at the far end of the table, suddenly shrieked, "*Aristide ! Aristide !*"

<sup>1</sup> *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, May, 1908.

"Heavens!" I thought to myself, "what can have happened? Has she swallowed a slug? Or has the captain under the table. . . . Well, one knows a Frenchman's *galanterie*." "*Aristide! Aristide!*" she cried. "*Quelle imprudence! C'est déjà salé!*"

On another occasion, the sea being calm and porpoises about, a flying-fish, no doubt hotly pursued by them, took refuge by leaping through the porthole of the lady's cabin and nestling in her bosom as she lay at rest in the coolest possible attire. But the poor fugitive found no shelter there. Screaming the lady rushed, all lovely as she was, into the saloon, to the delight of all spectators, and the unhappy fish languished alone.

Amid these diversions, the river of the Bosphorus was traversed, and then came Constantinople, the problem of the world—one of those cities, like Rome, before whose history the mind stands stupefied. As in a dream, I saw the old Galata Bridge and the Yildiz Kiosk, where the Red Sultan still dwelt in his isolated chamber, like a spider at the centre of his web. And from the palace gates I saw the slaves carrying out the six thousand dinners supplied by the Sultanic kitchens to dependent pensioners, petitioners, and creditors, who sat in the surrounding buildings year after year, petitioning in vain. And I saw the glory of St. Sophia, the home of God's Wisdom, and the glory of the vaulted bazaar, the storehouse of the world, and, best of all, the outer walls of Theodosius, and the breach where at last the Roman Empire fell.

And then, in a German ship (strange premonition!) I sailed down the swift current of the Dardanelles, past Gallipoli, past the Narrows between Maidas and Chanak, past the entrance at Sedd-el-Bahr and Cape Helles, famous already, but seven years later to be how much more famous in tragic history, and to myself how much more familiar! There on my left stood Troy, and passing down the coast I had Sappho's Mytilene on my right, and so we came to Smyrna, and from Smyrna across the islanded sea

to Athens again.<sup>1</sup> By special request or bribe, we steamed through the dangerous and senseless cutting of the Canal into the Gulf of Corinth, and out into the stormy Adriatic, and round the foot of Italy into further storm, so heavy that we ran into Naples for shelter, and putting out again were confronted by such blinding hurricane and snow that as we beat up for the Straits of Bonifacio, clinging on to the bulwarks while everything in the ship except the engines had gone loose and was rolling to and fro, I saw the bow heading straight for the rocks of Sardinia only a few yards away. But while I was debating whether an Englishman should be impudent enough to warn a German captain, or whether it was more becoming to go down in silent dignity, the signal for "Reverse engines" rang out, and with straining machinery we just avoided the shock. Even after passing through the Straits we fared but little better, for in the tumult of the storm, the captain owned he had lost his course and must make up due north, knowing that in that direction he must hit France somewhere. And so it was ; for we drove into Cannes instead of Marseilles, and accomplished the rest of the voyage by keeping the land in sight. It was with relief that at last I beheld the golden Virgin who watches over Marseilles waiting for us with her welcome.

<sup>1</sup> For my earlier visits, see "Changes and Chances," pp. 132, 147.

## CHAPTER X

### "THE NATION"

*"Vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum  
Splendet in mensa tenui salinum,  
Nec leves somnes timor aut cupido  
Sordidus aufert.*

*Quid brevi fortes jaculamur aevo  
Multa? Quid terras alio calentes  
Sole mutamus? Patriae quis exsul  
Se quoque fugit?"*

*Horace : Odes II, 16.*

**I**NDOLENT by nature, and averse from all contention, I have always longed only to emulate Horace in meditating the Grecian Muse, avoiding the unpleasant crowd, and dwelling upon my patch of field, housed where the ancestral saltcellar sheds a silvery smile upon the frugal board, and a narrow bed promises gracious sleep, unruffled by care or filthy greed.

When at last I returned from Russia, the central arch of life's journey was already far behind me. After all the torment and wretchedness I had seen or shared in Greece, in South Africa, in Angola, in the Islands of the Gulf, and now in Russia and the Georgian province, it seemed to me that perhaps enough had been done and I might begin, in Mr. Gladstone's words, to prepare my soul for heaven. To turn once more to Horace, I remember saying to myself, as I settled down like Catullus, into my familiar bed :

*"Sit modus lasso maris et viarum  
Militiaeque."*

Tired of all these, I would bid farewell to sea and wanderings and war. But it was a fond illusion. I had no time for

fatigue, and the greater part of my share in sea and wanderings and war lay still in front.

All through the spring and summer of 1907, I was occupied in contending, to the best of my influence, against the impending *entente* with the Russian Tsardom, and in my prolonged struggle to spread the knowledge of the Portuguese slave-system, as I had seen it in Angola and the Islands. To these contests was now added the equally disturbing contest for Woman Suffrage, as mentioned further on. But before spring had come, still another interruption dissipated my dream of frugal leisure. In January Henry W. Massingham, the famous editor under whom I had served on the *Chronicle*,<sup>1</sup> was appointed editor of the weekly paper then called *The Speaker*. J. L. Hammond had hitherto been editor, and I had written for him occasionally. But when the new appointment was made, he agreed, with characteristic generosity of spirit, to serve under Massingham as one of the Staff. For a few weeks the paper kept its former title, but on March 2nd it appeared for the first time as *The Nation*. Under that flag, and with that captain, it proudly sailed, often in stormy seas, for sixteen years, till, on April 28, 1923, its last number appeared as controlled by the supreme editor, who alone had created it and alone had given it influence and the prestige for courage, independence, and unflinching support of the noblest and most unpopular causes.

My own first article appeared on February 21, 1907, but it was only a review of an indifferent book, and my opportunity did not come till a week or two later, when I wrote my first “middle” (on Persia), and my second or third (on the Athenian drama of “The Persians”). I had hoped to be allowed to write “leaders,” partly because they are so much easier than “middles,” but chiefly that I might use them as weapons in my contests with the Russian Government and the Portuguese slavers. But Brailsford joined the Staff

<sup>1</sup> See “Changes and Chances,” p. 186, etc. This finest of editors died August 27, 1924.

at the beginning, and fought against the Russian *entente* with a knowledge and skill surpassing mine, though he had never been in Russia at that time. As to the slavery, the editor never denied me letters and articles on the subject, though one of the paper's chief proprietors belonged to a great cocoa firm whose interests were deeply involved. Thus excluded from the "leaders," except on matters of which I had very special knowledge (and then my "leader" was sometimes cut all to pieces as being "too violent"—an amazing charge to bring against a man of timid moderation)—thus excluded from "leaders," I continued to write "middles" whenever I was in England until our own editor was superseded at the date above mentioned, and, together with the rest of his Staff, I resigned from the paper.

I was quite right in supposing a "middle" to be much harder work than a "leader." A "middle" is an essay, usually upon some subject of immediate and perhaps temporary interest—some subject that people may be talking about even at the dinner-tables of the rich and great. Being an essay, it must express personality, and the expression of personality (which is style) implies a drain and drag upon the heart, the brain, or other vital organs of the writer. During all those sixteen years, whenever I was in London, I wrote a "middle" every Tuesday or Wednesday morning, after brooding over it the previous evening and night, on each occasion tormented by the conviction that I could not possibly write on the chosen subject, but was too ignorant and unimaginative even to touch it, and should have to send in a blank that afternoon. Somehow or other the thing always got itself done, and well up to time, but it left me for the rest of the day stupid, numbed, almost as torpid and speechless as a corpse. After some disappointment in love, Heine remarked :

*"Anfangs wollt 'ich fast verzagen,  
Und ich glaubt 'ich trüg 'es nie ;  
Und ich hab 'es doch getragen,—  
Aber fragt mich nur nicht : wie ?"*

Similarly desperate has been my condition after finishing a "middle," but my recovery was rapid, perhaps as rapid as the lover's.

My articles were always unsigned, and besides the satisfactory but not extravagant reward of payment (£3 an article, raised to £4 during the war when the value of money had greatly declined), my only compensation for all this exhaustion was an occasional word of praise from the editor. For he was one of the few who understand that the best way to get the best work out of any servant is not by blame but praise. I found, too, that he possessed a penetrating discernment, and praised only when, in the old phrase, "virtue had gone out of me." Such praise began early. On March 10, of my "middle" on Persia, he wrote, "I have not read a finer piece of prose." On March 26, when urging me to collect my "middles" into a book, he wrote, "There is nothing so distinctive now in journalism." And again on April 10, referring to my contest for Woman Suffrage, "Dear Achilles in the garb of a woman, who has captured your soul? But there is nothing like your work in modern journalism. You beat us all." So it continued at intervals throughout my service of sixteen years, and the praise, if given, always followed what I knew to be my best, because, as I said, virtue had gone out of me.<sup>1</sup>

A distinctive feature of the paper and a cause of its excellence sustained for so many years was the "*Nation* lunch," held usually on Mondays or Tuesdays at a round table in the National Liberal Club. All members of the Staff were expected to come, and some distinguished person, British or foreign, was frequently invited. The guests were generally politicians—Cabinet Ministers, leaders of parties in France, Germany, or other European countries, and sometimes in America. But many writers of high distinction came too, for one of Massingham's fine qualities was

<sup>1</sup> Some of these "middles" were included in my "Essays in Freedom" (1909), "Essays in Rebellion" (Nisbet, 1913), and "Essays in Freedom and Rebellion" (Yale University Press and Oxford University Press, 1923).

his passionate knowledge of literature, especially of the drama, and there was nothing narrow or doctrinaire about his paper or his politics. Sometimes the guest withdrew before the discussion upon the actual business of the week's issue began, but sometimes he remained, and it made no difference. Debate and criticism were absolutely free. Each gave of his best and truest, without reserve or apprehension. For myself, hampered by innate shyness and a slow-moving mind, I usually sat silent, lost in admiration of the rapidity displayed by others, their ready wit, their slashing epigrams, their knowledge of political secrets hidden from babes. But most of all I admired the editor's skill in driving that mixed and unruly team of distinguished writers with so light and steady a hand, holding them to the centre of the road, and preventing them from kicking over the traces, or even kicking each other. For, as might be expected among men of high temper and resolute convictions, stormy passions often arose. Violent contradictions, personal insults, and missiles more material flew across the table, and even I more than once had seized the tablecloth with the wild intention of clinching an argument by dragging it off, like fidgety Phil who would not keep still, when a word from the editor allayed the tempest and averted the loss of glass and viands. As when, in some swarming crowd, political passion rises to tempest and the indistinguishable mob is possessed by rage; torches and stones begin to fly; fury supplies missiles to hand; then if all at once they behold some respected figure, strong in tradition and honoured for long service, they are hushed and stand to listen, while with quiet words he subdues their turmoil and soothes the raging breasts.<sup>1</sup>

At the first lunch that I attended as member of the Staff, the genius of G. K. Chesterton was present, but I think he never came again. Perhaps his flow of conversation was too rapid, too overwhelming for what was, after all, a business assembly, gathered for other purposes than admiration of

<sup>1</sup> "Æneid," I, 148.



delightful paradoxes and epigrams such as replete dinner-parties may enjoy. Indeed, that man of genius has often reminded me of a village pump which, on festal occasions, may run wine, and ordinarily runs first-rate water, but never knows whether it is running wine of the best or water of the best or liquid mud or nothing at all, but always wears the same alluring look of promise. Among many who were witty, I think Chesterton's place as jester-in-chief was taken by J. A. Hobson, known so widely in both hemispheres for his original and humane theories in economics, but so little known for his wit. Yet his sudden witticisms were irresistible, and always had the further power of true revelation. They illuminated the discussion. They were "a sudden glory." And, having known the man since he was an undergrad in Oxford, quite undistinguished except as a high-jumper, I could tell when the wit was coming, anticipating it by his habit of raising the right eyebrow far above the level of the left just before it came. And I knew when the witticism was complete by the enjoyment shining through his ghostly countenance—an enjoyment that all could share. I suppose that for forty years at least the stupefying sword of death has been hanging over him by a cobweb. Is it that unmoving peril which has driven him to produce more work and finer work than almost any healthy man I have known?

And then we usually had Leonard Hobhouse with us, up to the middle of the war, when he ceased to come; I think because his opinion of Mr. Lloyd George and his policy as Prime Minister differed from the editor's in being more favourable; as well it might be without verging on idolatry. He brought to discussion the philosophic mind which Wordsworth hoped the years would bring to all. He brought an enviable balance and a benignity which only opposition could ruffle and the aspect of cruelty upset. But, though occupied with the comparatively concrete questions of politics and economics, he often seemed to my ignorance to be moving in unknown seas of thought where I could no

more follow him than I could follow Einstein or Bertrand Russell in their exalted spheres beyond the world.

At his side might be J. Lawrence Hammond, his pale and intellectual face almost hidden in a bush of dark hair and beard, until the war transformed him into a spruce officer in the Gunners, almost beyond the recognition of his earlier and more pacific friends. To us he brought, not only his unequalled knowledge of the workers in towns and villages a century ago, and not only his knowledge of eighteenth-century politics, and the character of all politicians from that date onwards, but the keenest insight into present situations and living personalities, backed by an unfailing enthusiasm for righteousness, and an unsuspected eloquence upon public platforms. This might seem to contradict his habitual modesty, but would certainly have led to the highest positions in the State had not his health deterred him from confronting the physical rather than the mental atmosphere of the House of Commons.

Of Henry Noel Brailsford I have perhaps said enough in this volume and in "Changes and Chances" to show his power of knowledge and steadiness of conviction. Indeed it would be impossible to exaggerate either. These qualities, combined with rapid judgment, skill in arrangement, and a singularly gracious gift of expression would make him a model journalist. And I should so describe him, if he were not so much more. His province on the *Nation* was foreign policy, though he wrote excellent "middles" on occasion. And in treating foreign countries he possessed a faculty of writing about foreign kings, leaders, and politicians just as though he knew them personally and could estimate their motives and characters; whereas to me, unless I have seen a man, he remains the shadow of a name.

In contrast with him, except in unflinching sincerity and convictions regardless of self-interest, stood Frank W. Hirst, our authority upon the practical finance of the City, and for some years editor of the *Economist*, until his house-keeping detestation of financial wastefulness during the war

compelled his resignation. Though finance is as obscure to me as the astronomy which it so closely resembles, I suppose that Frank Hirst might be placed in a class apart as the one surviving disciple of Bright and Cobden. Indeed I would go further, and, as someone was called "the last of the Romans," I would call Hirst the last of the Liberals. Now, in this present year of 1925, I see him still standing on the burning deck whence all but he have fled—intrepid, unshaken by doubt, indifferent to solitude, still waving aloft the tattered battle-flag of "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform," while with unyielding fervour he denounces Socialism and Woman Suffrage as being combined to lay the country in the dust of reaction, war, and ruin.

Sometimes Hirst could count upon the alliance of W. D. Morrison, Rector of Marylebone, admitted to our council chiefly for his knowledge of prisons and his long experience of sin. He had assisted the editor in exposing the abominations of the prison system some years before, and he brought to the table, not only great knowledge of his subject, but an established Liberalism, a happy freedom from religious intrusion, and a suavity of manner that ought to have soothed but sometimes only fanned our fury. He withdrew during the war because the editor's patriotism never reached the bloodthirsty standard set by Bishops and other ecclesiastical shepherds for the imitation of their flocks.

Then there was Charles Masterman, whom general consent would have designated as better suited for an ecclesiastic, because he was not one. Indeed the golden cross that for many years gleamed upon the lower part of his chest, inspired religious confidence, while his ascetic existence in the poorest part of South London, his impassioned exposure of the conditions there prevailing, and something priestlike in his manner appeared to identify him with the devoted band of young Anglicans who strove to animate their Church into a beneficent and social force, while maintaining her Catholic observances. But politics claimed him, among the rising and falling hopes of Liberalism, and he brought to our discussions

a valuable knowledge of practical affairs and of Parliamentary people, acquired as a member of the House of Commons and, later, of Mr. Asquith's Cabinet. Under those circumstances, his early philanthropic and religious enthusiasms were gradually tempered by the cynicism of experience, which added shrewdness rather than wisdom to his judgment. His wit distinguished him at every meeting, and no one was more useful in guiding even the editor along a comparatively cautious political line, or in revealing the weaknesses of the political leaders in whom our ignorance was sometimes inclined to trust. As in Hammond's case, I was surprised by his power of public eloquence, and his writing on political questions showed the same eloquent power of rapidity, inclining, like most eloquence, to a persuasive diffusion. I was at times still more surprised at his readiness to compromise with evil; for in those days my personal acquaintance with statesmanship was but slight.

During the war, probably while I was away in the Dardanelles, H. C. O'Neill joined the Staff as "military expert," bringing with him a singularly accurate knowledge of all the campaigns, and a strategic judgment so acute that, at one time, it kindled the wrath of the military command and caused the paper to be banned from circulation on the French front, simply because its estimate of the situation was too painfully correct. As assistant editors on the Staff we had two remarkable men in turn. First A. W. Evans (perhaps better known as "Penguin"), whose knowledge of literature, especially of last century's literature, was intimate and peculiar, and who for many years wrote a weekly page of literary discussion on those varied subjects which are always so difficult to choose. His was an Irish wit, very refreshing in the heat of our controversies, and a strongly marked sympathy with France and French literature, which led to his resignation when, during the war, the editor was inclined to favour that "peace chatter" which, if successful, would have averted the loss of many thousand innocent lives, and the incalculable burden of misery which still



H. W. MASSINGHAM

*From a Photograph by Hector Murchiston*



(in 1925) weighs like death upon this country and the Continent.

He was succeeded by H. M. Tomlinson, a child of the Lower Thames, traveller in unknown regions, admirable as war-correspondent, and a writer of playful imagination with an incisive humour pointed by rage. I must not forget Richard Cross, our Quaker solicitor from Yorkshire, who often attended the gatherings, and sometimes wrote, though only, I think, on his special subject of Temperance. As I have said in previous chapters, he was a man of an innocence and integrity unrivalled, and not usually connected with law in the popular mind. Nor must I forget the three secretaries whom in turn the editor fortunately engaged—Miss Mackenzie, Miss Manson, and Miss Gertrude Cross—diverse in appearance as in gifts, but equal in devotion to the paper's welfare.

The Staff may not seem large, but for actual weekly work it was smaller still. The editor could never count on more than Brailsford, Hobson, or Hobhouse, Hammond, Hirst, Masterman (at intervals), Morrison (at wide intervals), Evans or Tomlinson, and myself (when I happened to be in London). For the reviews he sometimes went to specialists outside the Staff, but the Staff did most of them, and the Staff really consisted of six writers, or seven at most, not counting the editor himself, who generally wrote the first leader, and sometimes the dramatic criticism. His power as a writer, and as a political thinker too, lay in his rapid grip of the subject's very heart. Of course he made mistakes—generous mistakes, especially in his enthusiasm for politicians who afterwards betrayed his hopes. But as a rule, his penetration to the very centre of the matter was unerring, and to me a perpetual amazement. That extraordinary power, combined with judgment in the choice of his Staff and his entire trust in them when chosen, was the quality that made of him the greatest editor whom I have known, and raised his paper to a height of influence even among those who eagerly read and scornfully condemned it. Though

he was so excellent a writer himself, when I look back upon the paper he created and maintained for sixteen years, I can but recall our Fleet-street saying: "Any bloody fool can write. It needs a heaven-born genius to edit."

Throughout that summer of 1907 I continued also working for the *Chronicle* under Robert Donald, writing occasional leaders and special articles, as when I made one of my rare visits to the debates in the House of Commons, and listened for three solid hours while Mr. Haldane, as Minister of War, expounded his new Army scheme. It included the formation of the Territorials, and arranged for the rapid expansion which saved France from destruction in 1914. I know many of the injustices committed during the Great War, but, unless it be the case of General Philip Howell, driven from his position as Chief-of-Staff to General Mahon at Salonika by the howlings of masculine and feminine malignity because he designed terms of peace with Bulgaria that would have shortened the war by two years—unless it be that case, I know of no injustice so flagrant and treacherous as the dismissal of Lord Haldane from his office as Lord Chancellor, because, being a philosopher, he had once naturally called Germany his spiritual home. That he—the very man who more than any other, by creating our Army, had saved France and possibly saved this country too—that he should have been reduced to private life in order to assuage the shrieking clamour of ignorant fanatics and the papers that hounded them on—that seems to me an act of baseness almost unequalled in the record of Governments.

But though I had the promise of being sent out by the *Chronicle* to any war that might occur, it was for the cognate subject of peace that I was immediately sent, and never so fully as on that mission did I realise the truth of the Aristotelian axiom that the knowledge of opposites is the same. In June (1907) the second International Peace Conference was held at The Hague, and I went. H. N. Brailsford and Jane Malloch Brailsford were there too, and in the intervals



when official futility paused, we contrived to see a good deal of Holland and the Dutch arts. And there was W. T. Stead, bounding with vitality, running over with human kindness towards emperors, kings, peoples, and a bevy of girls alike; exuberant for peace, and in the end calling for as many battleships as we could possibly build. And there were the representatives of Powers great and small, frock-coated, top-hatted, portentous, striving one and all to make some other Power yield an advantage without yielding a point themselves. To call that a Peace Conference was an amusing instance of ironic mockery, for nothing was further from the thoughts of all than peace. Are neutral ships to be sunk at sight in war? Are defenceless cities to be destroyed by bombs in war? Is poison gas a decent way of killing people in war? Those questions were discussed, and the ultimate result was as though two farmers, long accustomed to confirm their neighbourliness by burning each other's ricks, had met for a conference upon their future behaviour and had parted amicably with the agreement in future to use safety matches only. I watched the Carnegie Palace of Peace being built. I heard that a Court of International Arbitration was being established. In seven years, August, 1914, was to come.

Beside my lesson in diplomatic ineptitude, I learnt again the truth of the copy-book maxim that "Politeness costs little and gains much." In a long experience of the insults habitually showered upon harmless, necessary correspondents by their superiors, I have never known such insolence as was shown to me and other "reporters" (the word always used by insolence, sometimes in unconscious ignorance)—shown by the Ambassadors and other representatives of the Powers. To me personally, Sir Edward Fry, the British representative, was courteous enough, for I knew some of his distinguished family and had introductions. But to Brailsford and others his rudeness was surpassed only by the discourtesy—I had almost said the brutality—of Mr. J. H. Choate, the American Ambassador,

towards myself and all the other correspondents whom I met. How fine and how successful in contrast were the politeness and charming address of the German, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, then Ambassador to Constantinople, and later to London ! Every visitor received a frank and pleasing welcome. The vital subjects of the Conference were openly discussed, or if anything had to be kept secret, the correspondent was simply told so. Within two days, the German had won us all, perhaps the more easily because German courtesy was then unexpected. Did it all come of diplomatic cunning ? I did not think so. But if it did, other envoys might have borrowed much of it without losing their secretiveness or their reputation for diplomatic arrogance. Next to the German Ambassador's assistance, I received the greatest consideration from Señor Triana, the envoy of Chili, who also treated me as distinguishable from the lower animals.

During that summer I met for the first time many notable people, a few of whom were to be friends. Such people I mean as Max Beerbohm, unapproachable artist in two mediums of wit ; Mr. Winston Churchill, convinced of ability to dominate Army, Navy, and either political party though naturally uncertain which ; "Bobbie" Ross, whose devoted loyalty was working out the earthly stain of Oscar Wilde, and who was himself always the most engaging of friends ; Millicent, the beautiful Duchess of Sutherland (others are beautiful, no doubt, but she the beautiful) ; Herbert Trench, so good a friend and so earnest about reaching a height of poetry that he never reached ; John Galsworthy, just rising to his future fame upon "The Silver Box," "The Man of Property," and "The Country House," records of our dear old Society's final gasps ; Israel Zangwill, the glorified Jew and emancipated Englishman ; Elizabeth Robins, whom in Ibsen plays I had seen years before and worshipped from far off as supreme upon the stage until, at the height of her fame, she suddenly vanished into the magnetic north of Klondike, not seeking for gold ; Ramsay

and Margaret MacDonald (at The Hague), he so attractive in appearance, culture, and high aims, she in social zeal, personal affection for all who suffered, and entire carelessness of dress and the other artifices called feminine; George Lansbury, defeating every enemy by his innocent appeal to original goodness, and the only man I could ever endure to call me "brother"; and Maxim Gorki, whom I met at Dr. Hagberg Wright's, the very incarnation of intellectual Russia—face strong and deeply wrinkled, sad grey eyes melancholy beyond a plummet's fathoming, but, like the sea, lit now and then by a rare and beautiful smile; powerful in form, but with hands soft and nervous, always twisting the small fair moustache. And with him was the beautiful and high-bred lady for whose sake he had lately been expelled from New York hotels, and forbidden shelter in that fortress of connubial virtue. I had much conversation with him, considering that Bernard Shaw was present, and he agreed to write to the *Nation*, denouncing the proposed *entente* with the Tsardom, though what would statesmen care for the opinions of a literary tramp? Gilbert Murray I met, perhaps for the first time, then restoring to rightful fame the Greek dramatist nearest to ourselves in thought, but for generations despised as too easy for the upper forms of our public schools to construe. And in meeting him then and afterwards, I have never known whether most to admire his knowledge, his poetic discernment, his unfaltering exactness of speech, or his persistent labour for a wider world than universities. Patrick Geddes too I met for the first time, and for three hours, without pause, he laid out before me his schemes for beautifying the world, beginning with Dundee, Edinburgh, Chelsea, Dunfermline, and Cyprus, and displaying elaborate plans for converting all into suburbs of heaven. In his restless grey eyes and whirlwind of tossing hair, I recognised one of the born sowers of seed; for teeming over with pregnant ideas, he appeared to be saying to me, "Here's a handful of good seed! And here's another! And here's another! All

first-rate ! Take them or leave them as you will ! Who waters and tills them in the ground is no concern of mine ! "

Two other meetings were of more immediate importance to myself. Towards the end of that summer, the movement in India known as "unrest" was becoming continually more urgent or more dangerous in its demands and actions. Accordingly, I was ordered by the *Manchester Guardian*, in combination with the *Glasgow Herald* and other papers, to proceed to India and especially to examine the significance of the Swadeshi agitation. This being arranged, I was at once invited by Sir William Wedderburn to visit his home at Meredith, just beyond the Severn at Gloucester. He was close on seventy then, and more than thirty years of his life had been spent in the service of England in India, and of India in that country herself. Deeply sympathetic with the Indian peoples, but cautious and moderate even beyond the nature of Scotsmen, he was indeed the model of a Civil Servant both in knowledge and in judgment. In two days he taught my ignorance as much in detail and in principle as it could bear, chiefly insisting upon his guiding law that with tact, consideration, and decent politeness, the Indian peoples were the easiest in the world to govern. Throughout my coming visit to India that guidance served me well, and so did the books and pamphlets he gave me. But what I remember most clearly of Meredith itself was a portrait over the mantelpiece in the drawing-room. It was a picture of Sir William's own grandfather, who as a boy had escaped the slaughter of Culloden by hiding in the heather, though his father was killed there. To be talking to the actual grandson of one who had been out in the Forty-Five seemed to abolish time.

The other meeting was with Margaret Noble, always known as Sister Nivedita, a woman possessed by the wild and unworldly spirit of so many Irish. She was staying in Chalfont Lodge with George Montagu, afterwards Earl of Sandwich and owner of Hinchbrook, built by the Cromwell who was called the Golden Knight. Herself was

very attractive in manner and appearance, with a rather thin and very expressive face, light brown hair, usually hidden under her nun-like veil, and deep blue eyes, capable of turning into deeper purple in moments of passion or rage ; as when, in my dull military way, I informed her that, even if all the Indian peoples rose against the English at once, one single British division with rifles and guns would go through the length and breadth of the country as a knife goes through butter. Garibaldi's blue eyes are said to have deepened in colour under rage or passion in the same manner. But few men or women could equal Sister Nivédita in rage if any word were spoken in disparagement of Indians. For she identified her very soul with theirs, renouncing the name and nature even of her native Ireland, and forsaking her traditional forms of religion for a purged and purified Hinduism called Vedantic. To this she had been converted, nearly ten years before I came to know her, by Swami Vivekananda, the active and proselytising disciple of a Bengali saint, Ramakrishna, who spent a life of enviable contemplation in a temple-garden on the Ganges a few miles above Calcutta. It was a peaceful and innocent religious form, with a gentle ritual of flowers and sweets offered in a bowl to the Idea of God rather than to any definite representation of Divinity ; the temple where she chiefly worshipped stood in a monastery of about thirty monks just across the river from the girls' and women's school she conducted in the Bagh Bazar, one of the lowest districts in Calcutta's Indian quarter. Here she took the name of Nivédita (the Dedicated One), and became entirely merged in the Indian population and its way of life, never seeking to impose a foreign or outside ideal upon her friends. Her best book, "The Web of Indian Life," may be a glorified picture, illuminated by her own radiant heart, but Indians have told me there is no such true revelation of the Indian family and the inner meaning of Indian customs and religious thought. Other admirable books she wrote, such as "Cradle Tales of Hinduism," and "Footfalls of

Indian History," and she laboured hard in contending against famine in Eastern Bengal, besides organising bands of helpers ready to go out wherever help was needed throughout the vast country. But let no one imagine her as a gentle philanthropist. She appeared to me inspired by the "Gita's" exhortation, "Holding gain and loss as one, prepare for battle." When first I met her thus near Gerrard's Cross, she was just forty, and she had but four years more to live.<sup>1</sup>

Soon afterwards Mr. John Morley sent for me to the India Office, and I suppose I ought to describe that meeting as even more agreeable and important than the last. But, unhappily, it was not. John Morley was then verging on seventy. He had been for nearly two years Secretary of State for India, and was destined soon to dwindle into a Lord. Though he still had fifteen or sixteen years to live, he looked very old. His face was shrunk and wrinkled with innumerable little lines. His little blue eyes were already deeply sunk in the delicate and finely moulded skull, and they hardly glittered. He looked like a mummied relic of the Gladstonian age who had somehow contrived to keep a glimmer of life in his mummy cloths. His voice and manner were like a mummy's too—plaintive and rather querulous, though treating me at first with a fatherly benignity. Naturally, he spoke most about India, urging me to see the big men on the British side, and to tell the Extremists that they had no friends in any English political party, for even the Labour Party, admitting their ignorance, were giving the Home Government all possible support. He informed me that East is East and West is West—a platitude almost startling as coming from such a man. He complained pathetically that, in criticising his action towards the Extremists, people gave him no credit for the long record

<sup>1</sup> Her posthumous book, "Studies from an Eastern Home," contains a brief memoir of her by S. K. Ratcliffe, with short appreciations by Patrick Geddes, Professor Cheyne, Rabindranath Tagore, and myself (Longmans, 1913).

of his Liberalism. He said it was as though he asked for sixpence at his bank, and the cheque was returned marked, "No effects." He was evidently uneasy and distressed, for, as in most politicians and other people, there was even in him a deep line of vanity, and his sensitive nature suffered under every criticism, especially when it came from his own natural party. I did not quite realise then the intensity of bitterness, or the weight of stolid opposition, against which he had to contend among members of his own India Council and Anglo-Indian authorities in general, and I could not then estimate the real courage he displayed in resisting them ; for no one could judge of that till his correspondence with Lord Minto, the Viceroy, was published in his *Recollections*. I wish I had realised both the difficulties and the courage more fully at the time, for though it was my duty in India to quote the opinion of the chief Indian leaders on Morley as on other subjects, I might perhaps have added "mitigating circumstances," or even have mitigated the opinions of the Indian leaders themselves. I regret this all the more because I have often thought that my account of the violent attacks made upon Morley's policy by Indian leaders must have given offence to his constant friend and admirer, George Meredith ; for he never invited me to see him again.

It so happened that on the very morning of my conversation with John Morley (September 25, 1907) the Anglo-Russian Agreement in regard to Persia was announced. As *Punch* put it in a cartoon, the Agreement arranged that Russia should have the right to stroke the Persian cat's head, and England have the right to stroke its tail, and each might stroke the body when disposed. Unfortunately John Morley, after discussing India, asked me what I thought of this Agreement, and I told him what I believed would be the result for the wretched inhabitants of the northern region, and for ourselves, since Russian arms would be brought nearer down to the Persian Gulf. He appeared much vexed at this opinion ; said the North of Persia was Russian any-

how, and it was no good trying to keep the Russians out. He also said that it was his own Agreement, or at least that he favoured it as strengthening our Indian frontier and enabling him to reduce the Indian Army and so remit taxation. Whereupon I produced the *Times* and showed him the leading article, approving the Agreement but insisting that we must not on that account reduce the Army in India by a single man. At this he became very angry, and cried, "But it does not rest with them!" "No, but it soon may do," I replied, and we parted with benevolent neutrality—benevolent, at all events, on my side; for when I considered all that had passed within that shrunken head, all that those dimmed eyes had seen, and what excellent books that withered hand had written, I felt like the Gallic slave who finding old Marius glaring at him in a darkened chamber exclaimed, "I cannot kill Caius Marius!"

On October 4, 1907, I started for India from Tilbury Dock.



## CHAPTER XI

### A VISION OF INDIA

*" My Motherland I sing,  
Her splendid streams, her glorious trees,  
The zephyr from the far-off Vindyan heights,  
Her fields of waving corn,  
The rapturous radiance of her moonlit nights,  
The trees in flower that flame afar,  
The smiling days that sweetly vocal are,  
The happy, blessed Motherland.  
Her will by seventy million throats extolled,  
Her power twice seventy million arms uphold ;  
Her strength let no man scorn.  
Thou art my head, thou art my heart,  
My life and soul art thou,  
My song, my worship, and my art,  
Before thy feet I bow.  
As Durga, scourge of all thy foes,  
As Lakshmi, bowered in the flower  
That in the water grows,  
As Bani, wisdom, power ;  
The source of all our might,  
Our every temple doth thy form unfold—  
Unequalled, tender, happy, pure,  
Of splendid streams, of glorious trees,  
My Motherland I sing,  
The stainless charm that shall endure,  
And verdant banks and wholesome breeze,  
That with her praises ring."*<sup>1</sup>

**W**HEN I landed in Bombay (October 25, 1907) most provinces of India were troubled with "Unrest," the causes of which lay deep in history, and still remain little changed. The immediate occasions of the trouble had been gathering for a few years

<sup>1</sup> The words of this song, "Bande Mataram," are by a Bengali poet, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who introduced it into his historic novel called "Anandamath," or "The Abbey of Joy," a romance upon the rebellion of the austere Sanyasi Order against the decaying rule of the Mohammedans in Eastern Bengal when Warren Hastings was the real power. The song is written in Sanscrit and Bengali mixed, and has thus been translated by W. H. Lee, of the Indian Civil Service.

past, and as most of the grievances have now (1925) either been remedied or have taken different forms, I need not here discuss them beyond a bare mention. Lord Curzon had been appointed Viceroy at the end of 1898, and his term had been renewed five years later, but owing to a difference of opinion with Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief, he had resigned in 1905 and was succeeded by Lord Minto. No one can question Lord Curzon's energy and devotion during his long term of office. In his farewell speech he said :

“ If I were asked to sum up my work in a single word, I would say ‘ Efficiency.’ That has been our gospel, the keynote of our administration.”

If that was a boast, Lord Curzon had full right to make it. He had proved himself efficient in every department—education, irrigation, commerce, land assessment, the control of plague and famine, and the preservation of Indian arts. But in his zeal for efficiency he had bitterly offended Anglo-Indians by inflicting just penalties upon British regiments for the concealed crimes of some among their men. And he had offended Indian feeling in various ways, especially by his Partition of Bengal (October, 1905) and by a speech addressed to the Convocation of Calcutta University (February, 1905) in which he announced the doctrine that truth was rather a Western than an Oriental virtue, and that craftiness and diplomatic wiles have in the East always been held in much repute. As a protest against the Partition, the Swadeshi (“ Our own Country ”) movement was started, especially in Eastern Bengal, for the exclusive use of native productions, and the rejection of English salt, cotton, and other goods.

Various small disturbances had followed, not only in Eastern Bengal, and Anglo-Indians feared an outbreak on the fiftieth anniversary of the Mutiny (May 10, 1907). For speeches delivered in the previous March, a young Sikh and Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent social and religious reformer

of the Arya Samaj, were then deported and imprisoned without trial under an almost forgotten Regulation of 1818. This came as a great shock to the natural enthusiasm with which the appointment of Mr. John Morley to the India Office had been received, and just at the time when I arrived in Bombay, John Morley had endeavoured to retrieve the position by a wise but irritating speech at Arbroath, in which he compared the unrest to a crying for the moon, the Indian demand for Dominion Home Rule to a demand for Canadian fur coats in the Deccan, and lamented "the tragic miscarriages of impatient idealists, such as he had once been himself." In those words he was referring to Keir Hardie, who was in India at the time, and whose speeches had been shamelessly distorted by reporters instructed to discredit him. As Keir Hardie himself said to me, "The lie goes round the world while truth is putting on her boots."

But I have narrated my experiences in India with so much detail in a book which opponents admitted to be accurate,<sup>1</sup> that I may here be content to give a few scenes or pictures of what I saw and there recorded rather than enter upon discussions most of which would now seem obsolete.

Bombay might easily be made into a beautiful city, as indeed it once was. It stands on an island, and the sea runs up into it in long inlets and bays. Malabar Point, where the Government House and a fine little temple stand, is a pretty place, and the old native city is brilliant with colours. But over the district stretching away north and east hangs a thick curtain of stifling smoke. It rises from the chimneys of the mills, in 1907 numbering about eighty, chiefly manufacturing cotton cloth. Owing to the Swadeshi movement, the demand for cotton "Made in Bombay" had greatly risen, and Burma took large quantities, though not for political reasons. The mill-hands were receiving the following wages : men 18 rupees a month (a little over 10d. a day) on an average, with 25 rupees as a maximum ;

<sup>1</sup> "The New Spirit in India" (Harper's, 1908. Out of print).

women 7 rupees on an average, with a maximum of 10 rupees ; and children, on half-time, and nominally over nine and under fourteen, 4 rupees a month. Compared with the ryot working for wages on a farm the money seems high, for the ryot usually received the value in grain of about 2d. a day. But on the whole, I think the ryot's manner of life preferable. For the mill-hands in Bombay worked for thirteen hours a day, with (nominally) only half an hour's break. The labour was monotonous ; the noise hideous ; the atmosphere fluffy with cotton particles ; and there were no fans to decrease the dust, the heat, or the smell. Many of the children at work must have been far less than nine years old, and when an inspector came round, these were hidden away behind sacks. Still younger children were playing about in the deadly dust.

All round the factories stood workmen's dwellings or *chawls*, usually in long galleries of single rooms on the first floor over a row of open shops. Each family lived in one room, and, as a rule, there was no window but the door. The average rent was one rupee (about 16d.) a week for a room. Most families saved a lot of dusting and breakages by having no furniture except a metal cooking pot for the rice and dal (a sort of lentil), boiled in cocoa-nut oil. This was almost the invariable food, though in one of the black holes I detected the smell of a fish's ghost, and sometimes a family launched out into a maize pancake. A few of the rooms were decorated with portraits of Rama, Krishna, and Edward VII, and for a week during my stay every doorway was hung with a string of dry leaves, ears of rice, and crimson flowers like knapweed, in memory of some old festival in the village. All night long, under a waning moon, the mill-hands sat in the verandahs of the *chawls*, beating drums and chanting their Oriental scale. When we asked them why they sang, they replied that they were praising God. But what cause they had to praise Him no one could explain.

Down other streets at night, under that waning moon,

women were making their livelihood by sitting, in a succession of cages, behind bars through which men peered at them. A bed was laid out temptingly behind, and the women called to passers-by in many languages—ordinary “vernacular,” French, Russian, Japanese; I think every tongue but English. For English women are excluded from this particular trade, lest they should sully the reputation of the dominant race. More favoured followers of the same profession, suitable for the custom of British and European members of the Byculla and similar clubs, dwelt in comparative retirement among bungalows surrounded by pleasant gardens. I was not told the wages acquired by each class, but I have no doubt they were on an average far higher than the earnings of the female hands in the cotton mills. On the other hand, allowance must be made for the amounts the professional women had to pay to their employers, who kept them under strict control.

The next scene was in Poona. Plague was raging. Throughout the Presidency of Bombay seven thousand people were dying of plague every week. In the Punjab ten times that number had died every week of the summer. The disease had lately been traced to fleas that infect rats and the grey squirrels which swarm over all the gardens and bungalows. A paternal Government was offering a farthing per head for live rats, and industrious Hindus brought them in by hundreds, having perhaps bred them as a speculation. A paternal Government also offered sixpence to anyone who would submit to inoculation, and special but vain means were taken to prevent the thrifty from gaining the sixpence more than once a season. It had also established health camps and hospitals, crowded with the sick and dying. Brahmans died most. Europeans and the lowest or “sweeper” caste were most immune. The disease began with violent headache and high temperature, the tongue turning white or bluish in the cases I saw. The patient objected to food and drink, spitting out liquid by a spasm in the throat, as in hydrophobia. On the third day delirium

supervened, and the patient desired to get up and walk about. On the sixth day the patient usually died of heart failure. Meantime the glands, especially in the groin, had developed into hard lumps in their benign endeavour to work off the poison. Hence the name "bubonic," from the Greek for groin, and whenever I touched those glands, I found them hard and large as walnuts. Sometimes they absorbed, but usually they suppurated and had to be incised. In any case, they caused great pain, and an English woman told me she was dimly conscious of the pain and of the strain on the heart throughout her delirium. The plague was supposed to have been introduced about eleven years before by the rats in English ships coming from China. Many of its symptoms were unlike those of the plagues described by Thucydides and Boccaccio, but the origin and cure were still doubtful, and Poona lay stricken and desolate.

The desolation was the worse because all households were trying to celebrate the festival of Diwali in honour of Lakshmi, goddess of family prosperity, who provides wealth sufficient, and holds a baby to her breast. Diwali is the Indian Christmas, when ceiling and verandahs flutter with pink and yellow flags; windows and doors are hung with festoons of marigolds; neat patterns in whitewash are drawn upon the pavements before the door; and in the evening the children light tiny lamps on windowsills and doorsteps, or throw the spurting fires of little torches under the very noses of the sacred bulls that wander for their living from shop to shop. Other forms of Deity share in the festival (for who can tell under which form he loves God best?) and the temples of Durga and Vishnu, of Siva and Parvati make the sacred hill of Parvati outside the city sparkle with their lamps like an illuminated birthday-cake.

Venerable is every temple, and venerable the sanitary efforts of a paternal Government. But more venerable to me was a grave and monastic building that stood just beyond one of the Health Camps, from which rose the

smoke of yesterday's smouldering dead. Here dwelt the "Servants of India," and the Society's founder was waiting at the porch to receive me. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the greatest statesman I have intimately known. Born a Mahratta Brahman of the highest caste and ordinary poverty, he had thrown away the caste and kept the poverty. As a student in Bombay, he came under the influence of Justice Ranadè, also a Mahratta Brahman, Judge of the High Court, and a supporter of the Indian National Congress, sitting first in 1885, just after Lord Ripon had left the country, honoured and regretted by Indians as no Viceroy ever was, before or since. Under the influence of Ranadè and Lord Ripon, Gokhale imbibed a belief in reasonableness, and the holy hope of which the Hebrew Preacher has told us that Wisdom is the mother. But indeed a sweet reasonableness and the power of maintaining hope even under the deepest clouds of disappointment belonged to his own nature, and would have marked his actions in any case. I have not known anyone so considerate to opposition, or so equable in adversity. Add undeviating devotion to truth and absolute integrity of life, and one found in him an ideal of statesmanship not often conceived.

Ten years before I knew him, he had proved his nobility of spirit. It was in the early days of the plague's first visitation, and, under stress of frantic indignation against the methods of a paternal Government in trying to stay the plague, a British Civil Servant and a British officer had been shot while driving near Poona. Being then in London, Gokhale published charges against the methods of plague-observation by British soldiers which on his return he discovered were not supported by the promised evidence. Whereupon he offered an open apology to Lord Sandhurst and the Army, which aroused a storm of rage among his own people such as few could have lived down. But Gokhale lived it down, and just after the Partition of Bengal, he was elected President of the National Indian Congress as being

the safest guide in that crisis of extreme danger (1905). The Presidency of Bombay had also elected him as one of the Indians upon the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and when I first met him he had just returned from opposing the Seditious Meetings Bill in the Council at Simla. The appointment of John Morley to the India Office had filled all educated Indians with hope. As Gokhale said to the Indian National Congress: "Large numbers of educated men in this country feel towards Mr. Morley as towards a Master, and the heart hopes and yet trembles." Would John Morley in office, he asked, apply the principles he had learnt from Burke and Mill and Gladstone, or would he succumb to the influences of the India Office? The Seditious Meetings Bill and the deportation of Lajpat Rai without trial increased the doubt.

In 1902 Gokhale had retired on a pension of £20 a year from a professorship at the Fergusson College (£60 a year) in Poona, and had, in 1905, founded the "Order of the Servants of India," consisting of about a dozen men pledged "to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit, and to promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people." They were under vows to earn no money for themselves, and seek no personal advantage; to regard all Indians as brothers, without distinction of caste or creed; to engage in no personal quarrel, and to lead a pure personal life. After novitiate, a full member was granted 50 rupees a month (say £3 6s. 8d.) for himself and his family. And the immediate objects, under Gokhale's own guidance, were to free the laborious peoples of India from the bondage they laid upon themselves in harassing ritual, immature marriages, and the exclusion of some fifty or sixty millions of Indians from the decencies of life—those "Untouchables" who eat animals and think they commit a mortal sin if their shadow passes across a Brahman's figure.

I met Gokhale many times again—in Surat, Bombay, and London. I saw him last in London very soon before his



death early in the Great War. But I still picture him on that Diwali evening, sitting in the refectory where the Servants of India were gathered round him, together with friends even from the “extremist” parties, as they were then called—such friends as Kelkar, editor of the extremist *Mahratta*—besides other Brahmans, desperate enough to eat beside a carnivore like myself. Among friends also was Paranjbye, Senior Wrangler of his year, Fellow of St. John’s, Cambridge, Head of the Fergusson College close by, famous among Europeans for his mathematical powers, and almost tolerated in Anglo-Indian society at Poona for his skill at lawn-tennis. And among the Servants of India sat Srinivasa Sastri, unknown to me at the time, but since known to the world as Gokhale’s natural successor, and the true representative of his country, whether at the Washington Conference of 1921, or at many a conference in other cities. In concession to my outlandish and clumsy habits I was allowed a table, chair, and spoon at dinner. But the sons of the country sat on boards laid upon the floor, their backs against the walls, and in front of each of us was set half a banana leaf, neatly studded round the edge with little piles of rice, beans, and other seeds, flavours, sauces, and condiments, together with thin wheaten cakes unleavened, which when we had eaten, having drunk water from the brazen bowls that Indians carry when they walk, we washed up by burning the banana leaves, rinsed our hands, and continued the political discussion over pomegranate seeds, orange cloves, and pan-leaves concealing betel-nut and various spices.

A subject of laughter was a passage in the Rules of the Order :

“Its members frankly accept the British connection, as ordained in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India’s good. Self-government on the lines of the English Colonies is their goal. This goal, they recognise, cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient work, and sacrifice worthy of the cause.”

Naturally, "the inscrutable dispensation of Providence" aroused much amusement, but Gokhale defended the phrase with grave simplicity. For indeed he was incapable of irony, as of rhetoric, speaking with no eloquence beyond the eloquence of perfect expression, and for the rest, with all his power resisting the temptation to sulky aloofness, which is so strong a temptation to enthusiasts in opposition when active efforts seem vain. Serene, modest, definite in aim and in knowledge, he continued to discourse to us, until the moon rolled westward, and under her obscure silence I returned to the city of the plague, where the oil lamps were now extinguished, and the children asleep.

The next scene was still in Poona. I was in the printing and publishing office of the *Mahratta* and *Kesari* ("Lion"), both owned by the extremist Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the *Mahratta* written in English, the *Kesari* in the vernacular, and reputed to be more violent. While seated in the editor's room among bookshelves mildewing like all Indian libraries, I observed a crowd of brown and naked printers at the door, deferential but eager, and at a glance I knew that a terrible moment in my career had arrived. For, advancing to my chair, they hung around my neck a thick festoon of orange marigolds, picked out with the silvery tinsel known on our Christmas trees as "fairy rain." They encircled both my wrists with orange bracelets to match, and in my right hand they placed an arrangement of variegated flowers and spangles, stiff and formal as a sceptre. So I sat enthroned, and to complete the ceremony my dusky subjects sprinkled me with delicate odours from silver vessels; they soused my handkerchief in scent; they rubbed spikenard and aloes on the back of my hands. Then, standing at a distance, they contemplated their handiwork with kindly satisfaction, while I laboured to express my august gratification in an Imperial tongue of which they understood no word. Hung with fillets like a sacrificial victim, and bearing the floral sceptre upright in my hand, I issued from the front door into the full blaze of the public street, and the passers-by

regarded me with admiring interest, but without a trace of laughter. Such ceremonies are merely customary. Before I left India I learnt to dread a garland as little as my bed, and when at the final parting upon the pier my "boy" covered me with flowers and rubbed his weeping face upon my boots, I did not even stoop to dry his tears. But that first time—what shamefaced consciousness of my British trousers and khaki helmet overcame me ! Suddenly, with poignant pang, I remembered that I had once rowed two in the Christ Church torpid, and I appeared to myself like the Attis of Catullus, lamenting his self-imposed fate among the Asian worshippers of strange gods, and crying :

*"Patria o mei creatrix, patria o mea genetrix . . .  
Ego gymnasei fui flos !"*

Thus decorated, I drove with Kelkar through miles of rice fields to that great blue mountain conspicuous from Poona for its height and flat-topped outline—the mountain fortress of Singarh, famed in Deccan history for its capture by the Mahrattan hero, Shivaji, more than 250 years ago, and for its capture by the British early in last century. At an arched gateway through the ancient walls around the plateau of the summit, a tall, turbaned, white-clad figure, upright but using a long staff, appeared. It was Tilak, at that time Gokhale's leading opponent among political Indians. His full brown eyes were singularly brilliant, steady with daring, and very aggressive. They told of a wild and passionate nature, but outwardly the passion was strictly controlled. His manner both in conversation and public speaking was always very quiet, and he talked in brief, assured sentences, quite free from the curse of rhetoric. His complete self-command perhaps arose from prolonged legal practice at his own trials ; for he had suffered many things in law courts, and at first I feared that his was a legal mind, subtle, the prey of petty distinctions, rather\* capable of expressing thought than of thinking. But in time I discovered that his natural bias was towards religious specula-

tion and scholarly tradition. Of all the reformers in India in those days, he was in practice the most orthodox, though to me he professed a belief in progressive Hinduism. In learning he was known among Sanscrit scholars for his work on "The Arctic Home of the Vedas," maintaining that the Sacred Books originated among a glacial people inhabiting the Arctic Circle. I am not scholar enough to understand whether the idea is fantastic as well as learned. To me it is significant only because the book was published in the midst of the author's direst troubles, when money, reputation, and all were at stake, and few men would have spared a thought for Sacred Books or Arctic Circles.

All that night the wind roared over the mountain where I lay isolated, because Tilak, belonging to the same high caste as Gokhale, and to the same sub-section of it, refused to live or eat with a European. But at daybreak next morning he came and showed me round the ruins of the elaborate fortifications, discoursing on history like a professor with no interests less than two centuries old. Yet I knew that at Nagpur in the Central Provinces events were happening that day which deeply involved his fate. For the ensuing Indian National Congress the Moderates had selected Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as President. The Extremists had selected Tilak. As a compromise he had suggested Lajpat Rai, but Lajpat had refused in hope of avoiding a division, and ultimately the Nagpur meeting broke up in disaster, the Moderates accepting an invitation to Surat as a quieter place for the Congress. Tilak was, of course, perfectly aware of the crisis, but for some hours he discoursed to me on ancient history. Coming to me again later in the day, he analysed the actual political situation with equal calmness. He maintained that the difference between the two parties lay, not in purpose, but only in method. There was no thought of shaking off British suzerainty; that must be left for some far-distant time. The sole object of all reformers was to obtain a large share in the administration of their own country, and the remote ideal was a confederacy of the

Indian Provinces, possessing Colonial self-government, and leaving all Imperial questions to England. With this object his party sought to bring pressure on the British bureaucracy, if only to persuade them that all was not well, and in nothing but the method of bringing this pressure did he differ from the Moderates :

“Both parties,” he said, “have, of course, long given up all hope of influencing the Anglo-Indians out here. But even in England we find most people ignorant or indifferent about India, and the influence of retired Anglo-Indians works perpetually against us. When Lord Cromer said the other day that India must be no party question, he meant that Liberals should support the bureaucracy as blindly as the Tories. The history of the last year has proved to us how unexceptionably they fulfil their duty.

“Under these disappointments, we Extremists have determined on other methods. It is a matter of temperament, and the younger men are with us. Our motto is ‘Self-reliance, not Mendicancy.’ We work by the boycott and passive resistance. We do not care what happens to ourselves. We are devoted absolutely and without reservation to the cause of the Indian peoples. To imprison even 3000 or 4000 of us at the same time would embarrass the bureaucracy. That is our object—to attract the attention of England to our wrongs by diverting trade and obstructing the Government.”

We are next in Madras—a city boasting the dry light of reason and practical logic, but hot with religious fervour, none the less ; for Pascal has told us that the heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing. One day at dawn I went out to visit the god in his beautiful temple at Mailapur, not far from the widespread “Compounds” where the happy English and a few rich Indians reside, two or three miles inland from the sea and the jumbled “Black Town” of crowded “natives.” There, as I stood by the edge of the temple tank covered with lotus flowers, I perceived an elderly Hindu reading at the door of his modest house. The verandah was partly arranged as a stable for the sacred cow, partly laid with mats for beggars, wanderers, or religious

teachers who might be seeking shelter for the night. The Hindu had already bathed in the tank and washed his only garment of long cotton cloth, as he did every morning himself, according to the cleanly and chivalrous Indian custom. He was a schoolmaster, with a fixed salary of £3 6s. 8d. a month, and on this income he mainly supported his sons with their wives and children, all of whom lived in his house, under the direction of his widowed mother, who arranged which of the married couples should occupy the married quarters in turn, as there was not room for all. In gratitude for her services, and in reverence for motherhood, "which is the centre of human life," he told me that every morning members of the family washed the widow's feet and covered them with flowers, as though they were the feet of a divinity.

As it was a festival of Shiva, destroyer and healer, he was spending the quiet hours in meditation upon God, and reading a large volume of William James's "Principles of Psychology." He was himself inclined to the Monist view that the spirit of man is identical in essence with the spirit of God, but he felt no violent enmity towards the Dualists, who maintain a difference in essence. On his forehead he had painted the three upright lines of white and vermilion which represent the footprint of Vishnu, the maintainer of existence; but, here again, he felt no enmity towards the worshippers of Shiva, who draw three horizontal lines of grey or yellow earth across their brows. As a Monist, he admitted that his conception of the Universe hardly differed from Spinozism, unless he went beyond Spinoza in his belief in a universal Consciousness, the subtle waves of which he might perceive if only his mind were not too gross an instrument for perception. That instrument he had always striven to purify by clean living and the practice of concentration. He had never touched flesh or drink or tobacco, and by practising for an increasing time every day, he was now able to fix his mind on eternal truths with such absorption that transitory things no longer disturbed his

meditation, and he had acquired new powers enabling him dimly to perceive a Consciousness in the air and in so-called inanimate objects. He could sometimes even feel the impalpable workings of Karma—the influence of a man's reputed good or evil deeds working upon his own destiny, and affecting even the infinitesimal atoms of the Universe. He now longed only to withdraw from the world, lay aside his sacred thread—the triple thread of the Brahman—and devote to contemplation his few remaining years. How deeply I could sympathise with that longing! But I recognised that the necessity of earning 16s. 8d. a week for the support of his patriarchal household must in his case restrain it.

Among the multitudes of the city the dry light of philosophy was not so conspicuous. In their burning grounds I would meet little processions carrying milk in brazen bowls to wash the relics of the dead burnt yesterday, and to pour an offering for the spirit's consolation. Round another smouldering pyre a group of mourners would be seated, offering yellow flowers, and pouring water on the dust that was alive last week. Two would beat cymbals, and at long intervals another raised a large white conch-shell to his lips and blew a melancholy note. Why will the dead not listen when they are called? Why will they not give one word of answer to conch-shell, prayers, and love? And all the while, one of the mourners, regardless of this world, swayed to and fro, chanting the unhappy truth that "man must die, for life is a shadow, and man vanishes away; all know that this truth alone is undying; they know that they too shall vanish like a shade, yet they go back to the city and sin, and sin again, forgetting that they too shall vanish like a shade." So the lamentation went on, till the water was poured, the milk was offered, the conch-shell sounded its last vain call, and the living returned to their life of numbered days. It was the same yearning that brought Electra out to Agamemnon's tomb; the same that may still be felt on All Saints' Day in modern Europe,

even in the cemeteries of Paris herself. For it springs from the vain longing of all mankind not to be forgotten, and never to forget.

One night I found myself in a beautiful Vishnu temple. Here was his tank, here his Chariot. But the people were celebrating the festival of Shiva all the same, and among the deep orange columns of the external portico, dim figures in white or Indian red moved silently about, hardly revealed in the purple night by rare lanterns and tiny lamps. Being accompanied by a Brahman who was guardian of the temple, I was admitted through brazen doors into a vast courtyard leading up to the inner shrine on which no alien may look. Here the worshippers stood in an almost continuous crowd, silent, slowly moving in dubious obscurity. I caught one gleam of yellow light on prostrate forms among columns beyond, but a priest led me quietly aside into a vast chamber, where were stabled the mystic figures of a dragon large as life, a winged kite, and an elephant, all awaiting the great day when the God should take to his car and move in glory through the streets, seated beneath the sacred tree, which also was standing there. From a hidden and cavernous safe the priest then revealed a glittering wealth of emeralds and rubies, unnumbered as the Milky Way, and possibly surpassing their intrinsic value by their sanctity. Disappearing for a minute, after locking the safe, the priest returned with a pink garland, thick as a liner's hawser, and hung it round my neck, where two white garlands already hung, for I had been honoured by a political club. The new pink garland nearly touched my feet. It had been an offering to the shrine, and came to me cold from the neck of the God himself.

Thus sanctified and adorned, I passed back into the throng of worshippers, and at once felt a peculiar stir of excitement gathering around me, which I naturally attributed to my unusual appearance. But when my Brahman conducted me to a private house overlooking the precincts, for the first time in India I failed to receive the



Hindu welcome. The rooms and courtyards were glimmering with little lamps. Seated in the verandah, a band of pipers, blowing as they pleased, sought to drive dull care away—the further the better, one thought, for her own sake. Gods, kites, and elephants of painted alabaster were arranged in neat rows upon the table of an inner room, and little girls, dressed in the gorgeous silks and embroideries and golden ornaments of Southern India, tended them with lights and flowers. But the master of the house, himself a temple guardian, politely expressed an unwillingness to receive the foreigner, and when I turned back among the excited crowd that swarmed round me under the temple colonnade, for the first time I heard the loud and threatening shout of “Bande Mataram! Bande Mataram!” (“Hail to the Motherland!”) rising on all sides. My Brahman hurried me away, though he told me afterwards the outcry was really a compliment to my Liberal opinions. But to me it seemed rather to be raised as the reverse of compliment to my English appearance, which was far more conspicuous than my Liberal opinions have ever been.

On the “practical” side, I remember one incident that seemed to foretell one of the most widespread movements in modern India. In a northern suburb I found a wealthy Madrasi who took the extreme Swadeshi line of preaching complete boycott against all British goods, British Government, Laws, and Courts, so that, except for the taxes, the Indian peoples might forget the presence of the foreigners among them. That was an extreme but not uncommon position. The unusual part was his determination to set up cotton works without the aid of imported machinery. Collecting members of the old weaving caste, he had built a bamboo factory for hand-loom, where they were weaving the beautiful Indian fabrics at very little greater cost than the English machine-made stuff, and twice as durable. Hand-loom weaving still retained a natural life in many parts of the country, and he told me he could not keep pace with the demands of the Hindu women for his *saris* and

his bits of cloth as children's covering. Thus he seemed to foretell that gospel of the hand-loom which Mahatma Gandhi has since been preaching with apostolic zeal, both as a political and religious duty.

Still in Madras : it was evening, and the sky glowed with the deep and ominous colours of an Indian sunset in the rains. A hot wind, blowing in from the sea, threw the waves in heavy surf upon the sand. Up and down the long "Marina," or esplanade, the last carriages were bearing home Anglo-Indian ladies and youths comfortably wearied with tea-parties, polo, and other games. But on the broad sand between the esplanade and the surf, a vast circle of people was gathered about a little platform and chair. By hundreds they were seated there, and round the outer edge of the seated circle hundreds more were standing upright, like the rim of a flat plate.

When the meeting began the dark and eager faces could still be seen in the sunset light. The faces disappeared, and only the brilliant white turbans and white draperies were visible by the flicker of a big lamp fitted upon the platform. The waning moon rose late and shapeless among heavy clouds, and the dark faces reappeared, outlined in silver ; but still the crowd sat on. All were men, and most of them were young. They had assembled to show their joy at the release of Lajpat Rai and his young fellow-prisoner, Ajit Singh, both inhabitants of the distant Punjab, and both raised to heroes and martyrs by their deportation without trial. The news of their release (November 11, 1907) was greeted by all the country with joy, though not with gratitude. It would need a divine virtue to show gratitude when the wrong-doer undoes the wrong.

A little boy with head half shaven and a long tuft of black hair at the back stood before the platform, and amid complete silence sang in his native Tamil the Bengali song of "Bande Mataram," which had become India's national anthem. The music was of that queer Eastern kind, nasal, quavering, full of turns and twists, such as one may hear

from the Adriatic to Burma. Perhaps it is Persian in origin, for I have heard it best performed on the Persian frontier and by Persian musicians. Both the music and the words of "Bande Mataram" are too tender for a stirring war-song like the "Marseillaise." Here is no march, no thunder to inflame the soul of trampling hosts. The thunder comes only in the cry of "Bande Mataram!" But the tenderness, the love of country, and the adoration of motherhood are characteristics of the Indian soil.

When the song was finished, various speeches in English were made (English being especially strong in Madras, doubtless owing to the early missionary influence), and various lamentations were uttered over John Morley, the former champion of liberty. Then a new speaker rose—tall, dark, and aged, with clearly-cut features and a shaven head. His simple robe was of deep saffron-coloured cotton, and in one hand he held a wanderer's staff, symbolic of control over thought, speech, and action. Once he had been a rich man, a barrister, a councillor, a leader in public life. Now he had given away all he possessed. He had discarded the forehead mark of worship, and the sacred thread of his caste. Having said farewell to family and friends, to business, politics, and all transitory things, he had set off with only a staff to wander through India, begging his bread and teaching the divine realities, on which he meditated day and night. To this meeting he had come, not to discuss mortal injustice or British rule—things that hardly throw a shadow on the white radiance of eternity—but only to say that in his wanderings he had met Lajpat Rai, and found in him a pious human soul, simple-hearted, austere, and regardless of possessions. He spoke in his childhood's Tamil, and when he had finished speaking, he went upon his way, while the meeting dispersed and dying shouts of "Bande Mataram!" mingled with the roaring of the surf.

The next scene was in Cuttack, the broad strip of flat alluvial land formed by the rivers that trickle or storm

down from the mountains of Orissa, where tributary Chiefs and Rajahs still hold their territories, hill-tribes dwell, and elephants roam at large. The alluvial belt is under British control, but it is permeated by those uncertain rivers, which, more untameable than elephants, refuse control of any kind, and had lately flooded the region, first with water eight feet deep above the huts of the inhabitants, and then with sand three feet deep above the rice crops. I came to Cuttack in answer to a heart-rending appeal from Madhu Sudan Das, a highly-educated man, though belonging to the ancient and separate Uriya race, which understands no human tongue but its own, and whose script looks like a wire netting of circular loops. He called himself a Christian also, though his faith was founded rather upon Christ than upon Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Nonconformist doctrines. For it was founded simply upon Christ's one prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "The man who could utter that prayer while dying under torture was divine," he often said to me. "The moment I heard that prayer I recognised that truth, and I have never doubted it since."

His unlimited generosity and a passionate sympathy with his own people had gained for himself some of sanctity's privileges during his own lifetime. I have seen a man suffering from a frightful running sore entreat him for the loan of the eighth part of a penny that he might touch the sore with it and be healed. Another came with a brass bowl imploring Madhu Sudan Das to dip his finger into the water that his wife might be delivered from her dangerous labour, and the moment he dipped his finger in the child was safely born. Association with such a man was like a return to those enviable Middle Ages, when the Laws of Nature were not so stiff and obstinate as to refuse compliance with the wishes of holiness.

And all the might of holiness was called for in Orissa then; for the British officials, labouring with even more than their customary solicitude, were unable to save the

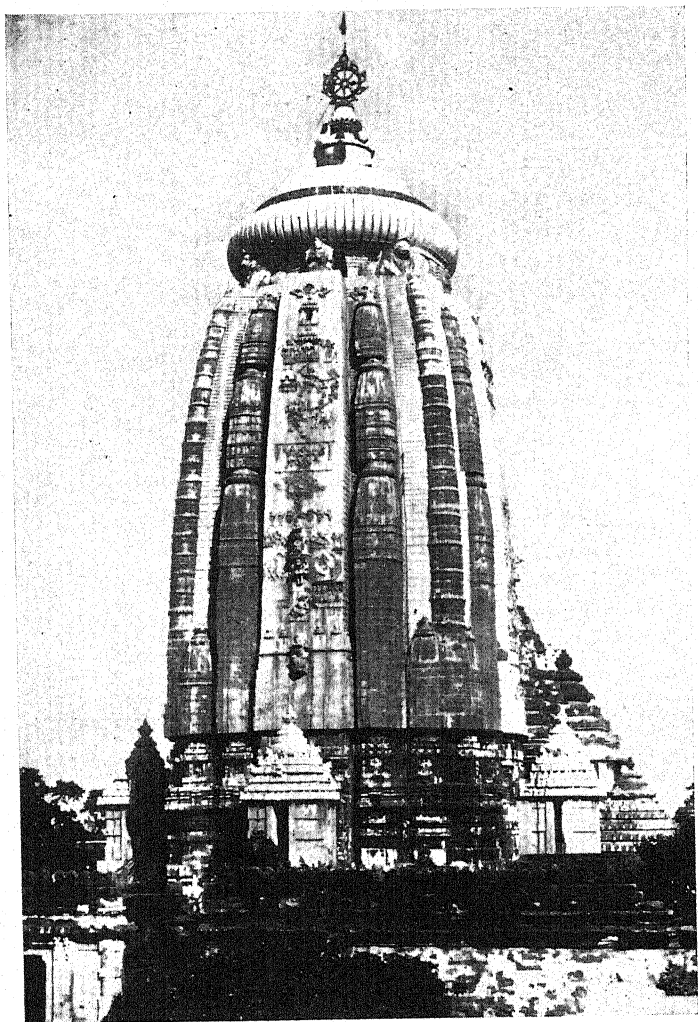
crowding inhabitants from death by cholera, "bowel complaints," and the other plagues of starvation. The Commissioner from amid his barricades of reports, abstracts, averages, and regulations, gave me the official figures of distress. He told me the number of square miles flooded, the number of population affected (over 300,000) the number of cattle, horses, and houses swept away, the number of deaths from cholera, and the number of human beings then on the point of death from starvation. But figures over ten cease to be personal, and I learnt more of famine from a band of thirty or forty brown skeletons who crawled towards me outside the office. There is no need to describe a brown skeleton—the projecting ribs and spiny backbone, the legs and arms like withered sticks, the deep pits at the collar-bones, the loose and crinkled skin, like the skin of a starved cat found under the tiles. But when brown skeletons fling themselves flat on the ground before you, with arms outstretched beyond their heads, and faces rubbing in the dust; when they take your feet in their bones and lay their skulls upon your boots, what are you to do? What are you to do when there are at least fifteen hundred men, women, and children only waiting to catch sight of you that they may make the same irresistible and hopeless appeal?

That terrible appeal was raised to me again wherever I was seen on a huge elephant approaching the wide regions desolated by the rivers. At sight of me the crowding skeletons abandoned the paternal Government's agent who was issuing little doles of rice, and flung themselves prostrate upon the hot sand which had ruined them. Surely a man who rode an elephant and wore a helmet and was white by courtesy, could save them! Thousands were inspired by that belief, and I had but one pocketful of coppers. Rice was selling at 1½d. a pound; it takes two pounds a day to feed a man decently, and the full wage for a working cultivator was 2d. a day in ordinary times. Where then was charity? Where were economics? The elephant from

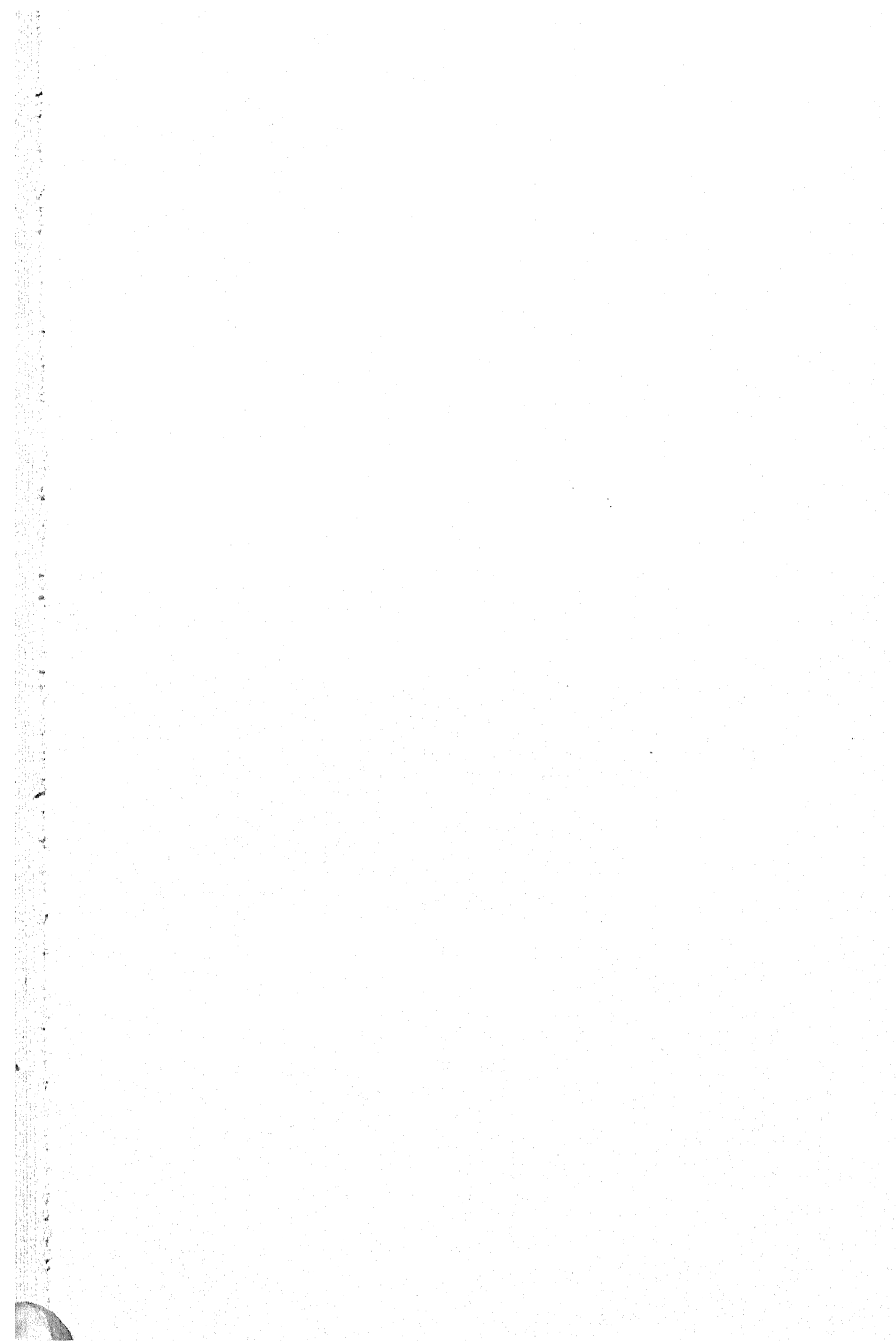
whose back I surveyed the scene as from a watch-tower, could heartily enjoy a daily meal that would keep any Hindu in prime condition for six weeks.

So I proceeded on my way, helpless as a scarlet God—the God who is believed to protect the villages ; helpless as the paternal Government, which had just then sent out officials in Settlement Camps to revise the land-titles in readiness for the next great Settlement, due in twenty years ; (for the Settlement has to be revised every thirty years, and Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, being a Scot, had an eye on the future) ; helpless as a Bengali Deputy-Magistrate, whom we found occupying so much of a dak-bungalow (rest house) that, like the elephant, I slept in the free air, Mr. Das, who was old and invalid, taking the one spare corner. But, unhappily, Mr. Das, in spite of his saintly powers, acted upon official minds much as a hedgehog would act on a naked man who found one rolled up in his bed, and when we requested an interview, the Magistrate, being determined not to fall below the standard of official dignity, received us with his legs stretched out on the arms of his deck-chair, and so entrenched he resolutely refused even to listen to his fellow-Indian's pleas for the hard cases of three or four widows waiting at the door. Waving a respectful goodnight to his boots, we took our leave. But a few days later we came upon a *chaukidar* (messenger) carrying round official orders to the villagers not to receive us or to take notice of our passing. And such is the obedience of the Indian spirit that hardly a woman or a child appeared to welcome the saint or to gaze upon the elephant.

It was a relief to turn to the next scene, in the holy city of Juggernaut—Puri by the sea. Together with many hundreds of white-robed figures, the train from Cuttack shot me out upon the sand one day before the dawn. But the more religious worshippers think it purifying to make the whole journey on foot, visiting other sacred temples upon the road, bathing in holy rivers, and each morning turning in worship towards the rising sun. To take years upon the



THE TEMPLE OF EQUALITY





journey only extends the glory of expectation, and if one has the holy patience to traverse the Grand Trunk Road measuring every two yards of its thousand miles by prostrating one's body along the dust and progressing like a geometer caterpillar, what is space, what is time, when you are on the way to God ?

Sometimes an entire family, children and all, sets out for holiness, but the best age is late in middle life. Then for many years the field has been sown and reaped, the buffalo fed, the children tended, the cotton garment daily washed. Then men and women long to go on pilgrimage—women because on pilgrimage even the most secluded *purdah* women are free as air. Untouched by cares of fortune, family, or any transitory thing, the pilgrims travel forth in calm elation of soul, their thoughts fixed only on the lasting realities of eternity, until they hear the thud of the long waves upon the sand, and before them rises the great pink tower of the "Lord of the Universe," surmounted by its wheel and flag. There stands the beatific vision ; there is the end of all those labours, the revelation of the Divine Essence for which they have waited so many years.

The temple of Juggernaut is said to show traces of Buddhistic influence—the teaching of that Buddha who made the great renunciation and received all mankind equally under his blessing. It is the shrine of peace and conciliation, and within it prevails the unaltering rule of worship that all castes and ranks and properties are equal in the sight of God, and that even a woman is equal to a man. Within that oblong wall the earthly distinctions fall away, and the naked soul remains alone to worship. There Brahman may dine with sweeper, and the warrior with the retail seller of flesh for carrion-eating Europeans. In simple kitchens the god's four hundred cooks daily prepare the sacred food for all who come. One is served with another, and all may eat from the same dish without contamination. Thousands of monks carry the food far through the land, and the pilgrims themselves take some of it home in their brazen

vessels, so that villagers and children left behind may taste the blessings of pilgrimage. For wherever the sacred food is eaten, worldly differences disappear, and the sacrament of equality is celebrated.

Side by side with Juggernaut, within the dark and secluded shrine upon which no alien may look, stand his brother and little sister—quaint figures all three, hideous with symbolism—the staring eyes of eternal vision, the atrophied hands and feet of eternal meditation—and every twelve years the symbolic figures are constructed anew out of wooden blocks ; for few among mankind are such fools as to identify the symbol with the God. Perhaps it would be too curious to imagine the little sister of Juggernaut as Liberty, and his brother as Fraternity. But the attribute of Juggernaut is Equality, and it is this glorious attribute which gives his temple its place as the most frequented fane of India, and inspires men and women with the passionate desire even to touch with one finger the painted board of which he is made. Many people worship what most they fall short in, just as in England we aspire to worship Christ, whose character and manner of life were so entirely opposed to our own. And of all great virtues the Indians have been most wanting in the sense of equality. Their system of existence is based on inequality, inevitable and permanent. The man who is born to study the Vedas will continue to study the Vedas, and so will his son. The man who is born to carry away sewage will continue to carry away sewage, and so will his son. Nor could the daughter of a millionaire merchant ever dream of marriage with a man of learning, since wisdom lies beyond the dreams of avarice. The system has its advantages in courtesy and consideration for others. To pass from a Scottish or American crowd into the streets of an Indian city is an education in behaviour. The obligations of high caste—cleanliness in food and life, intellectual alertness, and disregard of wealth—are as valuable as the obligations of *noblesse*. But the weakness of the system of caste both in India and England is that the

idea of these high obligations is restricted to certain classes and not considered universally binding. So that, in the end, we are driven back to the precept, "Pursue Equality," as it was once proclaimed by the ancient Greek philosopher, and still is proclaimed by Juggernaut.

## CHAPTER XII

### MODERATION'S TRAGEDY

"Thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action."

*Hamlet* : Act III, Sc. 1.

**A**FTER a brief delay in Calcutta, I entered my next scene, upon the vast and placid rivers of Eastern Bengal, where flow the sacred waters of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, fed by the snows on both sides of the Himalayas, and at last united after their beneficent course of a thousand miles. Separate or united they form the highways of that flat, malarious, and fertile land, equally productive of rice and of jute—jute the commercial and deadly rival of the people's food. I have never known such unmitigated peace as in my journeyings up and down those enormous rivers, while I sat upon a little steamer's deck, sometimes passing a square-sailed junk, sometimes a long black boat with pointed prow and stern pitched high in air; sometimes seeing only the mangoes and palm trees on the banks, and again the women washing themselves, their babies and their brazen pots, or the men driving gigantic perch into nets by the help of tame otters, held captive in long leashes. The only interruptions to peace were the bands of beautiful figures in white or yellow robes who came down to the landing-places to cry their "Bande Mataram" and cheer me as I passed. For the news of my coming had been conveyed from Calcutta to the so-called "seditious" centre at Barisal, and thence throughout the widespread

land, and no Englishman who expresses sympathy with Indians in their own country can avoid such welcomes. Torchlight processions also came at night, and sometimes conducted me to and from vast meetings arranged for me to address.

For, peaceful as was the outward scene, Eastern Bengal was the central cause of that "unrest" which in those years kept the Indian peoples uneasily stirring, like those who are awakened from sleep by ominous dreams. More than two years earlier (July 19, 1905), as I said, Lord Curzon had proclaimed the Partition of Bengal, creating "Eastern Bengal and Assam" into a new and separate province with a population of 31,000,000 and a capital at the mouldering Mohammedan city of Dacca, while Calcutta remained the capital of "Bengal," with a population of 18,000,000, or of about 54,000,000 including the outlying districts of Behar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa. Lord Curzon acted as usual in the name of "efficiency," but he could not have anticipated the devastating storm that his efficiency raised. Hundreds of protest meetings were held. Large numbers of long petitions were dispatched to him and to the Home Government. Less than a month after the Proclamation, a great meeting in Calcutta took the Swadeshi oath drawn up by Surendra Nath Banerjea, Principal of Ripon College and editor of the leading Indian paper, *The Bengali*, in these terms:

"I hereby pledge myself to abstain from the purchase of all English-made goods for at least one year from this date. So help me God."

On October 16, 1905, the Partition became what John Morley, in an evil moment, called "a settled fact," and the anniversary of that day was observed throughout India as a solemn fast. Ashes were rubbed upon foreheads, no meals were eaten, shops and bazaars were shut, women refused to cook and laid aside their ornaments, men bound each other's wrists with a yellow string as a sign of remembrance, and

the whole day was passed in mourning. Anglo-Indians sneered at the movement as "mere sentiment," and when English people talk of "sentiment" they always mean an emotion that does not bring in sixpence. The Anglo-Indians were right: this was an emotion that did not bring in sixpence to the Indians. But when it was found that the Swadeshi boycott on "Liverpool salt," Manchester cotton, and other British goods actually deprived our countrymen of many sixpences; when it was found that even the prostitutes of Eastern Bengal "went Swadeshi" and displayed their charms only through home-spun muslins; when a child asked its mother whether a mosquito was English or Swadeshi, and hearing it was Swadeshi, cried, "Then I will not kill it"—then Anglo-Indian indignation grew, and violent attempts were made to break the boycott and force the accustomed products upon an obstinate people. At the same time bodies of Volunteers were organised among the Indian youth to preach Swadeshi, check or destroy the imported goods, and, in one branch calling itself "Little Brothers of the Poor," to nurse the patients of cholera and smallpox, organise pilgrimages, and protect Hindu women when bathing in the sacred rivers against the disgusting crime of "group-rape" by Mohammedans who took the encouraging attitude of the Government towards Islam as evidence that they might treat Hindus as they pleased.

For the favour shown by the authorities towards Mohammedans in the new province was as obvious as were its reasons. A typical instance was the case of the Nawab Salimulla, an influential personality in the city of Dacca. Most of the Mohammedans in the province were Bengalis of the same race and language as the rest of the population, though at the time of the great Moslem invasion their ancestors had been converted from Hinduism to a belief in the Prophet and his one God by the ungentle argument of the sword. But the Nawab's ancestors had come from Kashmir, and owing to their skill in selling carpets he had inherited considerable wealth which he and his guardian

so dissipated that the Government Court of Wards had declared him a "disqualified proprietor," incapable of understanding his own affairs. Recently, however, Lord Curzon had reappointed him a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council as being a man peculiarly capable of understanding the affairs of the British Empire, and a paternal Government had further advanced him a loan of £100,000 at a very low rate of interest in the hope of relieving from the stigma of bankruptcy the munificence which he lavished upon his own pleasures. Such appeals to his better reason had completely reversed his earlier opinion of the Partition, which at first, in his simple-hearted manner, he had described as "beastly." And now, as the chief representative of Islam and riches, dwelling in a palace that overlooked the slowly stagnating river at Dacca, he made facile allowance for the criminal amenities to which his co-religionists were often inclined.

In the entrance of the palace, the large collection of knightly armour, recalling the onsets of Cressy and Agincourt, could hardly have been intended to suggest that the present occupier's ancestors were engaged in those famous battles, as a similar collection would naturally suggest in the mansion of an English parvenu; but I found the enormous vaulted chamber into which I was shown stuffed with kindred sweepings of European furniture-shops. A large arm-chair in solid cut-glass especially fascinated my gaze. And I had full time for fascination since the Nawab was an hour and a half late for his appointment, being detained in another palace with the wife to whom he was more attached than to the other three. So that, knowing the power of love myself, I had made every excuse for him when at last he swept into the room with a smile of ingratiating complacency. Indeed, his large and serene face, fringed by a flowing black beard, smiled almost perpetually with an air of that sweet innocence called by nursemaids "engaging." He was dressed in little purple slippers, thin pyjamas of white silk, a vest of exquisite muslin such as I had seen a few old

weavers still weaving under water—so fine that cows lick it up as gossamer, not noticing any difference—and this was “sprigged” with delicate rosebuds, as was the copious turban. A long purple cloak of flowered brocade, with a white border embroidered with passion flowers, completed the charming costume. “My own design!” he exclaimed with justifiable pride as he turned slowly round so that I might enjoy the full effect.

I attempted to concentrate his attention upon the vast Imperial problems for the solution of which the Government looked to him with so trustful a confidence. But it was hard, as the following notes from my diary will show :

“He was particularly proud of his skill in cookery, and he told me of many wonderful dishes he could make.

“‘You should taste my nougat!’ he cried, and leaning forward like a diplomatist imparting a State secret, he added, ‘Only this morning I composed a new almond toffee!’

“I was not surprised that, with such gifts only waiting to be recognised, he was deeply hurt by a lack of sympathy in his own family circle; for what prophet is without honour except from the wife of his bosom?

“‘My wife’—(he used the singular, though with a sigh)—‘you have no idea what difficulty I have in getting my wife to try a new dish! With her it is always mutton, mutton, mutton! She was brought up on mutton, and Indian women have so little enterprise. She will not try my dishes.’

“‘Let us go hence, my songs; she will not hear,’ I quoted in sympathy, and he sighed again.

“‘Our Indian women are very backward,’ he went on. ‘Now, there is my retired groom—what a woman his English wife is! How finished! What pleasantness! How much nicer a home she makes for him that I can ever hope for! I will show you what the difference means.’

“He called an attendant who had been keeping his eye on me from behind a glass door, and presently the attendant returned with heavy gold ornaments—bracelets, anklets, and necklaces—thickly sprinkled with turquoises and pearls.



" 'I gave these jewels as presents to my wife,' he said. 'They are my own design. I bought the pearls cheap when the plague was very bad here, and people were glad to sell at any price.'

"I commended this one evidence of ancestral thrift.

" 'Then I took the pearls and turquoises and gold to Paris,' he continued, 'and drew out a design for the Parisian jewellers to follow. You see the result. What grace! What finish! You cannot get finish in the East. It is the same with our women. They are backward. They have no finish.'

"By a mere slip of the tongue I said I greatly admired what I had seen of the Hindu ladies, and added something about seclusion and purdah.

" 'Hindu ladies!' he exclaimed indignantly. 'They don't understand what purdah is. They might just as well live shamelessly in public. It is only our Mohammedan ladies' who practise strict purdah, and seclude themselves with absolute delicacy and refinement.'

"I assured him I had supposed no less, and his aspect cleared again. Resuming his lightsome smile, he continued :

" 'For myself, I am singularly happy. I suppose even the Emperor can hardly be happier than I am ?'

"He said this in a tentative way, as though appealing to my personal acquaintanceship with Edward VII. But as I could offer no opinion upon that subject, he went on :

" 'Every morning I feel like a bird. I wake after my sweet sleep, when the birds are waking too. I like to hear them sing, because I know that I am as happy as they can be. I have my troubles, of course. I can never induce the gardeners to water my flowers at the right time. They will water them in the evening when the cool night is coming. I tell them they ought to water in the morning, as a protection against the hot day. They promise to obey, and next evening out they go again with their water-pots, as their fathers did before them. There is no science in the East, no progress, no reason.'

"For an instant this lamentable truth depressed him, but he revived at the recollection of his own assured happiness.

" 'I trust entirely to God,' he said. 'I leave everything in His hands, and all goes well. He has always helped me very much. Hitherto he has helped me so that I hardly ever have to work. He has never let me work very much, and I

entrust everything to His care. I think that is why I am so happy, and feel like a bird in the morning after my sweet sleep.'

"I suggested that an easy conscience conduces to sleep and happiness, and he agreed it was so.

"He then turned to more general subjects, and, like Lord Curzon, he much regretted the Bengali tendency to lying. He said it was corrupting even the Mohammedans, and nearly all Indian children were brought up in deception, usually to escape punishment or to give pleasure. I remarked that even in Europe these motives sometimes led to deceit, but he had formed an ideal of English education such as the Greeks formed of the Persian. English boys, he said, were taught to ride, shoot, and tell the truth. It was a fine testimony as coming from a man of education so different from our own.

"'You must fear God,' he said, becoming almost grave. 'There is no good in praying to God, for He needs nothing that we could give Him in exchange for His gifts. But we know that He is pleased with truth, and so we must tell it.'

"Then we discussed the Partition, and as I rose to go he exclaimed, 'Here in Dacca I have 10,000 warriors ready to die for me if I raise my little finger. That is how I keep the peace.'

"How far he expected to please God by that statement I do not know."

During my second sojourn in Calcutta I naturally visited the holy shrine of the goddess Kali, from whom the city takes its name, and witnessed the accustomed sacrifice of animals (only kids, I think) as it was commonly practised among ancient Greeks, Romans, and Israelites, blood being peculiarly acceptable to nearly all gods, and the idea of a divine service being retained in our "grace before meat." Acceptable certainly is blood to Kali, the Bengal Mother, symbolic of the Force in Nature, always moving irresistibly onward, with life and death in its hands. Blue-black she is, with three staring scarlet eyes, one of them in her forehead. In her four arms she holds the symbols of happiness and of destruction. One foot is planted on the prostrate body of a

man, and from her mouth a golden tongue protrudes. She is pausing in horror during her career of destruction through the universe—in horror at the discovery that her husband Shiva had flung himself before her feet to be trampled upon that so he might save the world. Among Indian women the protruded tongue is a sign of shame and horror, and if it seems a peculiar gesture, watch an English country girl when she drops a trayful of your best china on a stony floor, and you will see her put out her tongue just like Kali.

But far away up the Ganges on the other side of the city, I found another Kali temple, spacious, beautiful, a home of peace, but deserted because people love blood almost as much as gods love it, and hideousness stirs to religious emotion more than beauty. This was where Ramakrishna sat for years, expounding spiritual truth, and so creating the Ramakrishna or Vedantist Society, whose simple monastery faces the temple across the river. In the neighbouring Vedantic school, home of that passionate and saintly Sister Nivedita, I for the first time met Moti Lal Ghose, humorist, satirist, desperate pessimist, and incalculable force, as editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* or *Amrita News*. It was named after his mother's village of Amrita, a characteristic Indian word meaning both nectar and poison ; for in Indian names, as in Indian gods, opposites often coalesce. His wit gave that strange and isolated figure his influence, for the Bengalis love wit, especially as satire. He was already growing old, but though, when I asked him if he were coming with me to the Congress at Surat, he replied, "No, I cannot afford to die," he did come and has since died, after many years.

Far different in nature, and far steadier in influence, was Surendra Nath Banerjea, who as editor of the *Bengalee* almost dominated Calcutta on the Indian side. He had once served as an Indian Civilian, then as President of the Ripon College for Hindu boys, and now was the leading editor. But it was eloquence that gave him power. He was a born orator, for choice using the English language. Except for

Mr. Gladstone, I have heard no speaker use the grand and rhetorical style with more assurance and success. One afternoon a crowded meeting of many thousand students and other young men was gathered in the great College Square. There they stood, white-robed, bare-headed as is the Bengali custom, and when "Bande Mataram" had been sung, Surendra Nath rose. It was not an important speech. His object was only to sketch the programme of the coming Congress, and to urge all parties to unity. But he expounded those themes with a magnificence of phrase and continuity of eloquence that held me spellbound, much as I detest rhetoric. Sentence answered to sentence, period to period, thunder to thunder. There was no hesitation, no throwing back, no wandering around for ideas or words, nothing to remind one of a Member of Parliament at a flower-show. Out the great language rolled without a break or a drop, each syllable in its exact place and order, each sentence following a cadence of its own, so inevitably that one could foretell its rise and fall, like the movement of rolling billows on a calm sea. I suppose Cicero's oratory sounded like that. To Surendra Nath it was evidently the sincerest pleasure in life to hear the beat of his marching phrases, and to lead them out as in martialled order moving steadily to the front. It was to him the fulfilment of function, and that way happiness lies. After him I spoke, and the meeting ended.

It was unfortunate that for the following morning Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, had invited me out to the beautiful Residency of Belvidere, where I enjoyed breakfast together with the unexpected advantage of family prayers. All went well, as again reporters say till the moment of collision—all went well between us till the morning papers appeared, the Indian papers praising my sympathetic words, the Anglo-Indian papers pouring out upon me the customary abuse, perhaps kept always in type for such occasions. The Lieutenant-Governor was not pleased, and he must have been still more

annoyed when he heard from the Government spies that I had spent a great part of the previous night in converse with Arabinda Ghose, the wisest and most attractive of the Extremist leaders. Arabinda had been brought up in England, and complained that he could not speak Bengali well enough to get to the hearts of his own people. After St. Paul's School and Cambridge, he had passed first for the Indian Civil, but was disqualified on riding. For a time he had served the progressive Gaekwar of Baroda, and now was undoubtedly the real editor of the Extremist paper, the *Bande Mataram*, but still remained at large, partly owing to the number of "prison editors" on his staff. He seemed under thirty. Intent eyes looked from his thin and clear-cut face, with a gravity that seemed immovable. Silence and gravity were his characteristics, and his deepest interest lay in religion or philosophy rather than in politics, as he has since shown by retiring to meditation in French Pondicherry, where he is now (1925) visited by young Indians who listen to his words as to apostolic utterances almost divine. Even when I knew him I could describe him as possessed by the concentrated vision, the limited and absorbing devotion that mark the religious soul. To him Nationalism was indeed a religion, surrounded by a mist of glory, like the halo that medieval saints beheld gleaming around the Holy Grail. He cared nothing whatever for political reforms or attempts to unite British and Indian in common prosperity. The worse the Government was, the better for the Nationalist cause. The Partition of Bengal was the greatest blessing that had ever happened for India. No other measure could have stirred Indian feeling so deeply, or helped so well to rouse the people from the lethargy of previous years, when, as he told me, "each generation had reduced Indians more and more to the condition of sheep and fatted calves." Such was the man to whom I was naturally most attracted—the man who inspired official circles with the greatest alarm, because his influence, though least spoken of, was most profound.

For forty-four hours I travelled across the breadth of India, from Calcutta to the decrepit old town of Surat on the Gulf of Cambay. At every station, day and night, enthusiastic crowds were gathered, because in the train with me were Surendra Nath and other Moderate patriots, above all Rash Behari Ghose, weighty with years, distinguished for exact knowledge of English law and English literature, an Indian member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, a Moderate who had there shown courage, and now the chosen President of the Congress to which we were on the way. So wild was the ecstasy in Surat that for a long time there was no room to leave the train, and our little procession of carriages took two hours to cover the two miles from the station to the Congress camp—a camp from which the Extremists under Tilak and Arabinda had ominously separated themselves.

Ominous indeed was the situation. On our way across India we had heard the news that Mr. Allen, the Collector of Dacca, had been fired at on a station in Eastern Bengal, and was almost sure to die. In the end he did recover, but this was the first attempt at political assassination, and it filled all Moderate minds with apprehensive dismay. Even more ominous were the rumours of growing and violent divisions among the delegates themselves. Suspicion stalked from camp to camp, insinuating her half-truths, and whispering of treachery. Had not the Moderates altered last year's resolutions on Self-Government, Swadeshi, and the Boycott? And what, pray, was Sir Pherozezshah Mehta doing there—the wealthy and eloquent Parsi from Bombay, the orator who had said that India had been assigned by Providence to the keeping of England, on the whole for India's good? What was his right-hand man, Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, doing there, with his infinite and tiresome knowledge of British-made statistics? Was the Congress after twenty-two years to be given over to mitred Parsis, who fatten on India, worship the sun, and give their dead to be eaten of vultures instead of burnt, as every decent corpse should be? The

Congress was betrayed ! India was betrayed ! The Holy Mother was betrayed ! Were these things to be endured ?

All night long the leaders passed from tent to tent, from house to house, discussing, questioning, deliberating, uncertain and apprehensive, and among the peace-makers I was interested to observe Moti Lal Ghose, whose qualifications for the task were about on a level with a porcupine's. Terms were suggested, conditions were offered, but the dawn found all uncertain and apprehensive still. By noon the delegates and the vast audience—over ten thousand—had gathered in the Pandal or pavilion cleverly constructed on different levels so that all might see. Arranged according to provinces, the brilliant turbans of orange, crimson, gold, and white rose and fell like waves, and in a black and solid square sat the bare-headed delegates from Bengal. As I walked up the central gangway with Dr. Vickerman Rutherford, a Liberal member of Britain's Parliament, I noticed that cries of "Shame" and low, penetrating hisses mingled with the cheers and cries of "Bande Mataram !" and I feared my amiable and Liberal friend was in for trouble. But peace was for the time restored by the entrance of a quiet, white-turbaned figure, who entered humbly from the side, with clasped hands, and a look of sad determination on his face. Like one man, the ten thousand sprang to their feet and cheered, for who does not love the man that has suffered for a cause ? It was Lajpat Rai.

To give time for the burning of a delegate who had died we had to sit two hours and a half, ourselves burning under the sun that beat upon the pavilion's transparent roof, and then the leaders entered and ascended the platform among general cheers—Rash Behari, President-elect ; Sir Pheroze-shah, the mitred Parsi ; Dinshaw Wacha, the calculating machine ; Surendra Nath, the orator of Bengal ; Gokhale, whom some were tired of hearing called "The Just" ; and other leaders of Congress, famous for twenty years. The local chairman of the Reception Committee spoke at length, as chairmen will, upon the history of Surat and the Congress.

The audience listened, silent but impatient, for history was dead, but the present moment quite alive. A Judge from Baroda proposed that Rash Behari take the Presidential Chair. A murmur passed over the pavilion, and one shrill voice cried "Never!" Surendra Nath, the hero of a hundred platforms, the grey-bearded son of thunder, vigorous still in the service of the cause, friend and champion of both parties alike, was seen standing beside the table to second the proposal. Hardly had his immense voice uttered ten words when the storm broke, as when one hears the crash of thunder almost before the lightning ceases. No further syllable was understood. Waving their arms, their scarves, their sticks, their umbrellas, a mass of delegates and spectators on the chairman's right sprang to their feet and began shouting without pause. They came from the Central Provinces, but white-turbaned Madrasians joined them. The whole ten thousand were up, shouting for order, shouting for tumult. In vain the chairman pealed his brass Benares bell. In vain Surendra Nath sprang on the table itself. Close beside me I could just hear Rash Behari consulting in shrill and angry tones with Gokhale, depressed, anxious, harassed with all-night negotiations. Again the son of thunder sprang on the table, and again the tumult roared. Continuously the chairman pealed his Benares bell, and all in vain. In an inaudible voice like a sob, he declared the sitting suspended. The platform rose and filed out through a door at the back of the tent, following a group of Parsi and daring Hindu ladies, who had beguiled the time by quavering through the song of "Bande Mataram" now and then while we waited.

At noon next day the Pandal was again crammed to stifling. At one o'clock the Presidential procession entered, amid applause that breathed defiance to interruption. I was invited to take my seat among the Congress leaders at a green table stretching the whole length of the high-raised platform, before which there was no railing, but only a steep escarpment. A place at the table had been reserved for



Tilak, but I noticed him sitting in the front row of the delegates, and that seemed to me ominous again. The chairman called on Surendra Nath to continue the speech interrupted at the previous meeting, and the hero of a hundred platforms spoke with chastened exuberance, much as I once heard Gladstone speak after the defeat of his first Home Rule Bill. Motilal Nehru, then known only as a wealthy barrister from Allahabad, Moderate in everything but generosity, said a few words. All went delicately, as when one tests a crust of volcanic ash. The chairman put the question that Rash Behari take the chair as President, and amid various shouting declared it carried. Heavy with years and knowledge, Rash Behari transferred himself to the seat, and unrolled his carefully prepared and printed address, most of which had unfortunately appeared in that morning's paper already, retaining provocative passages that the orator had intended to omit. "Brother delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "my first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me."

Beyond that first duty he never went. Tilak was seen standing right in front of the Presidential chair itself, protesting, expostulating in that calm, decisive voice of his. He was there to move an amendment, he said, and there he would remain. The official chairman shouted, "I declare you out of order." "You are not in the chair," Tilak replied. "I also declare you out of order!" shouted Rash Behari. "You have not been elected," Tilak replied. Uproar drowned the rest. Wild young Moderates sprang to their feet, gesticulating vengeance. They clamoured to have Tilak hurled down the steep of the platform. Behind him Rash Behari mounted the table and was seen pealing an unheard bell. Ingeminating peace, if ever a man ingeminated, Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood beside his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from assault. But Tilak asked for no protection. "Only violence can move me," I heard him saying ;

"I move for nothing else in hell or heaven!" In front, the white-clad delegates roared like a tumultuous sea.

Suddenly something flew through the air—a shoe!—a Mahratta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendra Nath on the cheek. It cannoned against Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the breakwater of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing out fury, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I beheld the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos. Why the assailants did not regard my head as Moderate I cannot imagine, but as usual in moments of panic, I followed the rule of remaining still.

In the vast pavilion before me the combat raged at large. Chairs flew through the air, like shells discharged at a venture. Long sticks clashed and shivered. Blood flowed from broken heads. It was a confused and difficult conflict—ten thousand men crowded together among ten thousand chairs; no uniform, no distinction, nothing to mark off Extremist from Moderate except the facial expression of temperament. So the conflict raged and swayed and crackled. Suddenly the police appeared. No mistaking them—short blue uniforms, and little clubs that make no distinction of political opinions. Only thirty entered, but thirty drilled men who know what to do are to ten thousand who are not quite sure, what one dog is to a thousand sheep. With them came their Inspector—Scottish, small, and wizened as a jockey, calmly ordering here, ordering there, protected in the roaring turmoil by courage and a penny cane. Out into the open the raging tumult was driven, and in half an hour, gazing upon the vast Pandal, strewn with broken chairs, sticks, and rags of raiment, I felt like one who treads alone some banquet-hall deserted.

Next day I attended a conference in the Extremist or Nationalist camp, where Arabinda silently took the chair,

with his grave and desperately immovable face, and Tilak expounded the situation for nearly two hours, dwelling on the sins of Moderation, but still hoping for reconciliation in face of the common enemy. The day after, I left Surat, feeling that the Indian National Congress would never be the same again ; nor has it been. In the twinkling of a shoe it had been changed, and a new spirit, a different and difficult spirit, had arisen in the country—a spirit which since then has grown to the power we now are beginning to realise. Returning along the railway with the famous Congress leaders, I heard at every station angry shouts of “Down with Rash Behari !” “Down with Gokhale !” “Down with Surendra Nath !” It was Sunday, and on the Wednesday before no cheering, no garlands had seemed enough, no perfumes sufficiently sweet. It had been roses all the way.

At Benares a quiet river went sliding under immemorial walls. The water was still white and dove-coloured with morning, but already white-robed men and women were stealing down the steps with naked feet, and silently approaching the edge. Hung with flowers, and wearing on their foreheads the triple mark of the God, they settled cross-legged upon slabs of stone or wooden platforms, and plunged at once into prayer, or, opening long and narrow books, the men began to recite aloud the words of inspired ancestors. Men and women alike, still draped in white, walked step by step down into the water till it passed over their heads, and then came back step by step, and stood dripping in prayer. They raised water in their hands, splashed it three times on their mouths and foreheads, and with arms lifted to the risen sun, poured what was left back into the river. Covering her face with her hands, one girl knelt upon the bare stone so long in adoration that the sun dried her white length of *sari*, till it hung loose around her form again.

The common life of the holy city began, and the cries of the milkmen, the cake-sellers, the fruiterers, and the drivers of bullock-carts mingled with the temple bells. The dead

were brought down to the river, hung with marigolds and wrapped in cotton clothes, as when they lived. Pushed out, feet forwards, a little way from shore, they were put to soak in the holy water until wooden pyres should be ready to consume the deserted forms, happy in a double purification. Washerwomen carried down their bundles of linen, and swung each piece over their heads again and again upon flat stones in the water, until it was cleansed, with the additional advantage of sanctity. Ascetics in brick-dust robes passed up and down among the crowd, bearing long staves in memory of their vow to constrain their thoughts, their speech, and their desires. Other ascetics, dressed only in a coating of ash, sat in perpetual contemplation, forgetful of the body and the world. One man I saw in faded yellow robe, worn by sun and rain, passing quietly in and out of the worshipping throng, as he followed the little footpath by the water's brink. He was of those who all the year long tread the bank of the Ganges, from her source in the mountains to her mouth among the forest swamps, and back again to her source in the mountains.

"Yours is the Order I belong to by nature," I said, giving him a half-penny, as was the custom, though he had not asked for it.

"For you it would be easy and difficult," he answered, in good English, and he led me up many steps and along galleries overhanging a cliff of ruinous masonry to a cool courtyard, where Brahmans were daily fed on boiled rice and salt, laid out upon a plate of stitched banana leaves.

"It would be as easy for you as for anyone," he continued, when, after his meal, we climbed to the top of a flat roof where a shelter had been erected for shade and worship; "but for you it would be difficult also, because you hang upon this world, and your soul is entangled in illusions and desires. Like all your people, you call the unreal things realities, and for reality you have no name."

He pointed to a low parapet before us, and told me how some years before a boy while seated upon it and reading a

Sanscrit book of wisdom, was pushed over by a monkey, inspired by the God, and fell.

"Look over," he said, "and you will see the projecting slab half-way down which he broke as he fell. They gathered up his shattered body, and laid it, almost alive, in the Ganges. I cannot doubt that he attained at once to salvation, his soul returning to the universal consciousness, as the space inside a pot returns to universal space when the pot is broken. And in his salvation I may claim some share, for I was his father."

It was noon, and the sun blazed upon the roof. Green parrots flew screaming among the trees of a garden far below us. The hum of the city arose, pierced with loud cries, and over the far-off iron bridge across the Ganges a train was slowly passing with prolonged and shrieking whistle. But still the crowding pilgrims moved down the steps to the water's edge, and bathed and offered flowers, and stretched up their hands in silent adoration, or recited ancient and sacred words aloud.

"'It is possible for you,' I said, after a long time, 'to desire escape from the danger of rebirth, and to speak of being merged in the universal consciousness as salvation. But how about these people who come in millions to the river? All their lives they struggle only to live. From day to day their thought is only how to keep alight their tiny glimmer of life, and to hand it on to others who are their children. How can one suppose that they come to the river so wearied of existence as to pray only to be saved from being born again? I myself, who am but one of them, would walk in the opposite direction if I thought the river were going to extinguish my life, for I should rather be born a mouse than nothing.'

"'You remind me,' he answered, 'of those worshippers of Vishnu who pray in great humility, "Let me be born a cat or dog, O God, if only I may love Thee!" It is a good prayer, and you may join in it, for, being a wanderer through the world, you can always hope to become a religious man, avoiding the many-sided degradation of which people tell me who have visited the West. I, too,

was once engaged in common business, managing large estates in this very city, and I know the rich men in the streets, though they cannot now tell who passes them so close. But each day I gave much time to contemplation, and I took the vow of kindness to every living thing, just as you see those Jain monks there who are feeding ants with sugar, and would not willingly kill a cholera germ ; or like those wandering Sisters of the Faith who wear a strip of white felt across their mouths lest they should breathe a midge to death, and who carry soft brooms in their hands to sweep the place where they are about to sit, lest the weight of their frail bodies should crush a beetle's irrecoverable life. By such means, even in your present body, you may begin to penetrate the illusions of existence, and at rare moments may perceive some gleam from what one of your own poets has called the white radiance of eternity.'

" 'As for these pilgrims,' he went on, ' they are like a woman who lights her cow-dung fire at evening, not considering as she cooks that the flame is composed of ten divisions, each symbolic of a faculty of the soul. Or they are like a man who walks by the light of sun or moon, not considering that sun and moon are nothing but symbols of creative power, as indeed are men and women, fire and water, heat and cold. Or they are like the nautch girls who have a separate song for every hour of the day and night, but do not consider that their songs are only the pulses of eternity. In cooking, in light, and in song each finds an ignorant joy ; and in the same way these pilgrims have a dim sense of righteousness and purification in the outward symbols of truths that they will never learn in their present life. By such means, for a few hours together, they may free themselves from the illusions of the world, and in some cases even reach the state of those highly religious men who devour putrid cats, to prove that all material things are alike, all being equally unimportant.

" 'But for people like you,' he continued with pity, ' what can one say ? You are still ensnared by political anxieties, artistic interests, and the desires of personality. You have far to go before, by contemplation and hard discipline, you perceive how like happiness is to its opposite—how accurately the joy of existence may be compared to a fire-fly wandering about in an unlimited vault of darkness, or to the inch of cool shadow thrown by a snake's head upon

a burning desert. Till you can reach that supreme state when birth, and life, and death have no separate meaning, you have far to go. But there is always hope for one who will begin by overcoming earthly desire. For there has been one being, and one alone, who in this flesh attained to salvation without death, and he was Janaka, the father of Sita, Rama's wife. He sat still, you remember, with one hand in a blazing fire and the other upon a beautiful woman's breast, showing that to him the one was the same as the other, being both indifferent.' "

After sitting long in meditation, we descended, and as I passed on in the rapid twilight, I came to the courtyard of a temple to Shiva, the dissolver of existence, and there in the semi-darkness I beheld a lonely woman walking round and round the sacred tree, driven by blind desire to bear a child, and supposing that the God would thus assist her prayer. So untameable among the vulgar is the passion for life. But for myself, I went away sorrowful, knowing that I was not in the least like Janaka.

Many other strange and beautiful sights I saw, and much of deep interest I heard, as I wandered about that strange and beautiful country, clinging to this old world as one lacking any sure and certain hope of a better. In Benares itself I saw Mrs. Annie Besant one day at dawn, finding her in some outpost of her Hindu College, seated cross-legged on a white platform, and dressed in a white silk costume, bordered with scarlet and gold. She looked much the same as when I used to hear her twenty-five years before denying the possibility of God on the same platform with Charles Bradlaugh in Old Street or City Road. But she was finer now, white-haired, and very dignified. She spoke to me mainly on the College and practical politics, in which she then favoured the Moderate Party of Gokhale and Lajpat Rai, as indeed, with occasional lapses she has continued to do. I found that her Brahman Guru (to whom she made profound obeisance when he entered) honoured her highly for her practical powers, but considered that, having a merely Western mind, she could not rise to the heights or

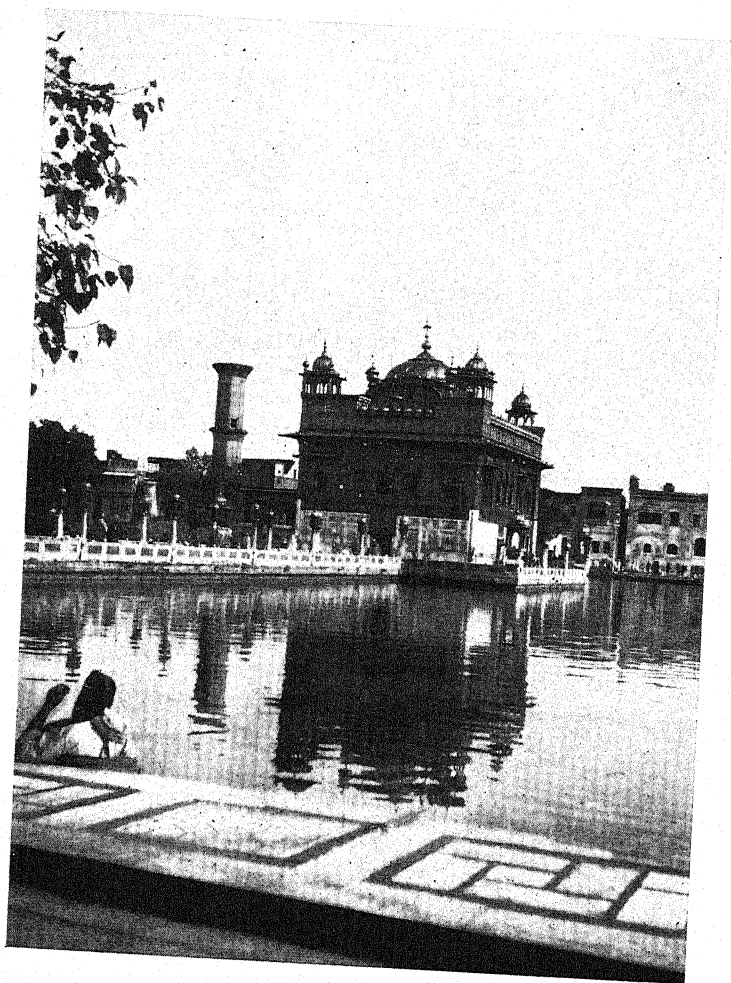
penetrate the depths of Indian philosophy ; and I suspect that is true of any mind that demands in philosophy some glimmering of reason.

In Allahabad I was the guest of that Motilal Nehru, above mentioned as a model of moderation ; and there I had the delight of meeting again after so many years my old school-fellow at Shrewsbury, George Chesney, proprietor and editor of the *Pioneer*, the most reasonable and fair-minded of Anglo-Indian papers in those days, though he did not "see eye to eye" with me on many points.

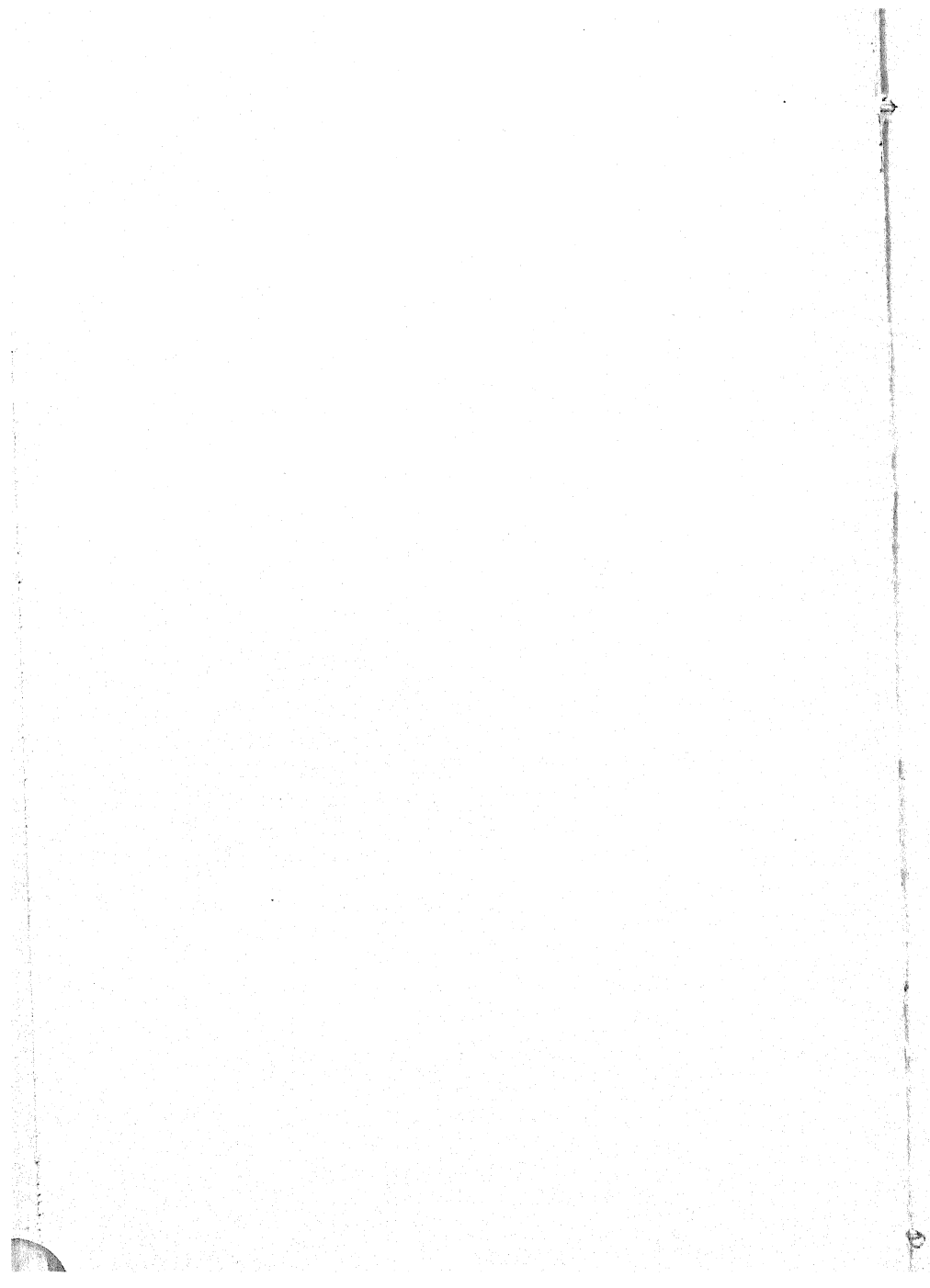
Thence I went out into a "famine district" of the United Provinces—famine due to drought as the famine in Orissa had been due to flood—and there I witnessed both the ordinary life of the villagers and the relief works of a paternal Government, organised under Sir John Hewett, the Lieutenant-Governor, who, by one means and another, was providing life for 164,000 souls in his province. Passing as rapidly as possible by Cawnpore and Lucknow, lest I should be tempted, in the cause of good will among men, to begin the destruction of the Mutiny memorials and ruins—a destruction so essential for our future—I came to Agra and to Delhi, lingering over the usual sights in both, but enjoying the unusual society of Professor Rudra, Bengali Principal of St. Stephen's College in Delhi, and the unusual society of C. F. Andrews, at that time Rudra's right hand, and since then so famous as the friend and assistant both of Rabin-dranath Tagore and the Mahatma Gandhi. Rawal Pindi, Peshawar, and the entrance to the Khyber (then impassable for military reasons) naturally followed. But of greater interest was a sojourn in Lahore in company with Lajpat Rai. There I became acquainted with the Vedic College and the two branches of the Arya Samaj—the "Culture" and the "Vulture" branches, which, in spite of their mocking nick-names, were not so venomous in animosity towards each other as are the Christian sects.

Thence I visited the Sikh shrine at Amritsar (a name so ill-omened now) and the Gurukula or Vedic School near





SIKH TEMPLE AT AMRITSAR



Hardwar where the Ganges issues in holy purity from the Himalayas. And so I returned to Delhi; thence to the great Moslem College at Aligarh; to Jaipur in the Native State of Rajputana; to the great deserted city of Amber; and to Baroda where I was the guest of the famous and progressive Gaekwar and his Maharani, a woman of great knowledge and fine wit. As some record of these varied journeys, I will but extract a few contrasted passages from my diary:

“At Lahore, during intervals of Vedic worship, I was invited to a quiet and secluded house by an Indian acquaintance, and there found a nautch girl and three musicians (two with rude wire fiddles, and one with a drum) and she danced and sang for me. The songs were all of longing and love, chiefly of despair—the lover abandoned for a rival, or lying sleepless while the beloved slept; sometimes scornful, sometimes so utterly devoted that he (or she) would perform for the beloved the most menial or disgusting tasks. The gestures were very simple and restrained—just a touch at the hair for extreme grief, and across the upper stomach for passionate longing of heart, the hands thrown out quietly and with peculiar grace, and at the end of each verse the palms beaten softly three times together. After two or three verses (each line repeated three times) she took a fixed attitude—one hand raised, or both hands raised, or the edge of the outer skirt just lifted, like butterfly wings, and so she shuffled round a circle, the bells on her ankles jingling. There was no other dancing, except a modest whirl of skirts towards the end. The words were very free, but not immoral or alluring. The pained expression during the song gave place to quiet satisfaction at the end of each verse. The girl has lovers, who keep her, but she is not promiscuous, and it is thought bad manners to make advances to her when she is out on business in dancing. Standing in her brilliant dress of gold, crimson, and silver, with gold-trimmed, white transparent veil, and supported on each side by the dusky musicians in brown, the black-faced drummer with his gleaming teeth behind, she was a delight for Velasquez.”

From notes upon the Gurukula (“The Master’s Home”) near the holy city of Hardwar, crowded with religious

beggars and the hideous sacred monstrosities of bovine abortions, I may extract a few sentences for the benefit of people interested in the vital but repellent subject of education :

"The school is maintained by the 'Culture' or strictly vegetarian section of the Arya Samaj, and stands on a large open space surrounded by pleasant jungle where in a single day I have seen many deer and monkeys, many wild boars and jackals, the bone-strewn home of a tigress with cubs, the spoor of a huge elephant, wild peacocks flying heavily among the trees, and all the other delights of Eden, except Eve. Over the gateway into the tin-roofed quadrangle floats a scarlet banner, inscribed with the sacred letters 'OM,' and the holy Ganges, just issuing from the Himalayas, flows close by.

"The education follows the lines laid down by primeval revelation, and those lines are Spartan or Platonic. The boys are admitted at eight, and their parents take a solemn oath not to remove them till they are twenty-five, when the Vedic Scriptures allow a man to marry. During those sixteen years the Brahmacharies, or disciples, are not allowed to go home or to write and receive letters. The parents visit them about twice a year, and on Founder's Day some sixty thousand parents or other Samajists come and encamp on the edge of the jungle in grass or wicker huts, bringing their own supplies for three days, which is all of family life the boys know, and all of feminine society.

"Such isolation from the common world seems to me too like the inhuman monotony of workhouse schools, and it probably exaggerates the sexual desires and curiosity of growing youths, though one must remember how many boys in common life are ruined by parents' vulgarity or mothers' indulgence, and these boys are instructed to subdue sexual passion by deep-breathing and holding the breath, which is said to be a good antidote, though I do not find any beneficial effect from it myself. The masters told me that the only hope of preserving the boys from child-marriage, maternal ignorance, and the evil of cities lay in this monastic seclusion, and Superintendents live with each class of twenty-five day and night—a most unenviable duty.

"The boys sleep on plank beds, but are allowed a blanket

in winter—a cotton blanket, of course, for nothing animal may enter there, and at the gateway I was requested to put off my boots of murdered leather. All dress in yellow *dhotis* for school, and white *dhotis* for play. A few wear wooden sandals with a peg between the toes, but nearly all go bare-foot, and with feet and legs bare they ride bareback, play football, cricket, and a form of ‘prisoners’ base.’ They get up at four, and bathe in the Ganges, all learning to swim there. They attend a Divine Service round the symbolic fire, and beside the three monastic vows they are taught to speak the truth, and to practise daily contemplation upon eternity. The only form of punishment is exclusion from games. School hours run to seven, and the ordinary subjects, including English, are taught in the vernacular. But the chief subject is Sanscrit, just as in my old school of Shrewsbury it was Greek. At least seven years are spent in getting that amazing Sanscrit grammar off by heart, though the young boys cannot understand a syllable of it, and then they learn to read the Vedas. Whether Sanscrit literature is worth all that, I cannot say, but in the upper forms the boys can read and speak Sanscrit as easily as their mother tongue, which is more than we did with Greek.

“Like all the schools and colleges that I have visited in India, the Gurukula has the common fault of trying to force knowledge into the mind by giving information, as though the mind were a passive vessel to be filled through the passage of the ears. To change this abominable system into real education would be the greatest reform possible for the whole country.”

While staying in the Native State of Baroda as the Gaekwar’s favoured guest, I was witness of another side of Indian life. It was the festival of the mango bloom—the evidence that spring had come—and it was called the Vasantha, celebrating the season of a young man’s fancy, or, in Hindu mythology, the time when the gods called on Kama, the spirit of love, with his bow and five arrows of desire to rouse the god Shiva from his profound contemplation at sight of his wife. Kama was slain by one glance of the terrible god, but, unfortunately, was restored to life as an invisible form in the hearts of men and women, whence the

siege of Troy, the love-lyrics of the poets, our daily novels, and all that woe :

"At nine o'clock all the great Sirdars, or landowners, of Baroda gathered to a durbar in the palace hall, and sat in white-clad rows, with Mahratta turbans of red and gold on their heads, and curved swords glittering across their knees. On the inlaid pavement before them a Madrasî nautch-girl danced without ceasing, to the inspiring noise of three or four pipes and a little drum, all sounding their peculiar notes together but with random independence. The girl seemed to know what emotions they wished to express, for she danced forward with gestures that she felt to be suited to some imperceptible motive, her jewels flashing, and her heavy golden sash swinging over her trousers. Then, having reached her limit of advance towards the empty throne, she walked quietly backwards, softly clapping her little brown hands to some imperceptible time.

"Suddenly from the palace garden came the thump of the tiny old guns which the paternal Government allows Native Rulers to retain for saluting purposes as evidence of regal power, and to the rear of this artillery the Maharajah entered, keeping step with the British Resident at his side. Behind him, stiff with scarlet and gold, stalked the officers of a British regiment quartered upon the State by the terms of an ancient treaty. Having the Resident upon his right, the Maharajah sat himself upon a purple velvet sofa, while the British officers settled into the topmost chairs, like a patch of poppies in a daisy field. The pipes and the drum never ceased, and the dancing girl continued to advance and retire with various alluring embellishments.

"Attendants appeared, bearing garlands and silver sprinklers and tight little bunches of flowers. The heaviest garland was selected for the Resident, and, bending his comely head, he received it submissively on his neck. It was composed of jasmine, picked out with 'fairy rain.' He was also presented with a tight bunch of flowers, and lavishly sprinkled with scent. Similar but smaller garlands were then placed round the necks of the British regimental officers; similar but smaller bunches of flowers were bestowed upon them, and they were sprinkled with scent, but less lavishly. When the junior subaltern had been sprinkled, the Maharajah and the Resident rose, and the British contingent marched out of the hall, their garlands

flopping about their thighs, as when in ancient days Greek bulls went adorned for sacrifice.

"Again the tiny old guns did their utmost to voice the honour due to Imperial grandeur, but the Gaekwar sank back upon his sofa, and a sigh of relief passed through the hall, echoed, as I thought, by the ladies who sat behind carved shutters in a gallery, like the old grille in the House of Commons. Again the attendants bore in garlands and flowers and sprinklers. The Maharajah was garlanded first, and then his son, heir to the sofa, who received his garland with a scornful smile telling of Oxford's contamination.

"Silver plates were then brought in, heaped high with vermilion powder and with yellow, symbolising the fertile dust of flowers in spring, and this dust was thrown in handfuls over the Maharajah and his heir; then over each Sirdar in turn. Suddenly all the white chests blazed with patches of scarlet and gamboge, while the pipes and drums pursued their own wild will, and the girl danced up seductively. Then the Maharajah rose, and the festival of spring was over, except that for the rest of the day the street boys rejoiced in 'all the fun of the fair,' throwing red and yellow powder over every passer-by. And if they mixed a little oil in the powders, the passer-by would recall the flowers that bloom in the spring whenever he put on those clothes again.

"It is in the spirit of interested trustees for idiot children that the paternal Government allows the ruler of a Native State toy artillery to play with, and arms his handful of troops with muzzle-loaders that I had despaired of ever seeing again. An ordinary ruler might thus solace himself with the pretty shows for a life of miserable impotence, just as Napoleon's son solaced himself with toy soldiers in the Austrian palaces. Fantastic palaces in every street, marble courts where fountains play all summer, bedizened elephants in lordly rows, bejewelled girls beyond the dreams of Solomon, studs of horses ceaselessly neighing, changes of golden clothes for every hour of the day and night, golden coins piled high in treasury vaults, drink deep as wells, exquisite foods selected from all the confections of Paris or Siam—Oh, but to be weak is miserable, doing or suffering!"

The Gaekwar of Baroda was far from being an ordinary ruler. As one among India's greatest reformers in his own

State, and as one of the most dignified and independent princes in relation to the British rulers of his own country, he earned the compliment of mingled praise and suspicion among the British authorities. Yet even in his own Court, and after association with himself and his enlightened Maharani, such were the thoughts that his position suggested to me. And perhaps for that very reason, the editor of a prominent Bombay paper, commenting on the articles I had written or the speeches I had made, or simply on my attempts to understand Indian life and feeling, began a leading article with the startling condemnation: "We have seen this Mr. Nevinson. Outwardly he has the appearance of a gentleman, but at heart he is no better than a Socialist!"



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE "DAILY NEWS"

*"Von Sonn' und Welten weiss ich nichts zu sagen,  
Ich sehe nur, wie sich die Menschen plagen."*

Mephisto : Prolog. im Himmel : "Faust."

ON returning from India in the spring of 1908, I found myself out of work except for my weekly article for the *Nation*, but very busily occupied, as I usually have been when out of work. I was speaking a good deal on India, besides writing my book called "The New Spirit in India." Once I spoke upon the subject side by side with Keir Hardie, and any contact with that great-hearted man is always a delight to remember, so fearless and honourable he was. I was writing and speaking also in hope of averting the proposed visit of King Edward to the Tsar—a visit obviously tending to a "Triple Entente," which, as we know now, might just as well have been called an alliance. I was deeply engaged in the agitation for Woman Suffrage, and all the time I never ceased to denounce the Angola slavery and the cocoa planters of San Thomé. All these highly unpopular and controversial interests gave me plenty to do, but nothing to live upon, and my daughter was studying music in Milan, my son was learning to draw at the Slade School!

Since the previous autumn, A. G. Gardiner, the distinguished editor of the *Daily News*, had been meditating an invitation to me as leader-writer and war correspondent; but his meditations were crossed by natural scruples, and both by nature and Nonconformity he was a scrupulous man.